

THE OFFICE AND FUNCTION OF PROPHET IN  
ANCIENT ISRAEL, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
AMOS AND JEREMIAH

by

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I certify that this thesis is the  
result of my own unaided research



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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to examine the nature of the prophetic 'office'.

Chapter I considers the difficulties which arise from the variety and lack of clarity in the terminology applied to prophets and their activity. Developments in usage and in the phenomena of prophecy itself allow us to accumulate little clear information about the position and function(s) of the prophets in Israelite society. In canonical prophecy, however, the stress is clearly on  $\eta\eta\tau$ , the word which the prophet must deliver.

Chapter II is chiefly concerned with early or, at least, non-canonical prophecy. Although the divisions between 'types' of prophets are far from being clearcut, it is argued that all the 'types' discussed, 'ecstatic', 'institutional', 'cultic', and 'false', are set over against the canonical prophets. It is found that in the early period there are few prophets who hold an office in the sense of an institutional appointment with defined functions. The dominant impression of canonical prophecy is of non-institutional activity. The 'false' prophets seem to be linked with the cult and to have the function of proclaiming weal, but the distinctions between them and the canonical prophets, who proclaim predominantly woe, are not sufficiently clearcut to permit the description of the one as official and the other as unofficial.

The examination of prophetic functions in chapter III similarly leads to the conclusion that the canonical prophets lack an office in the sense defined. Examination of passages in Jer. confirms the conclusion of chapter II that the canonical

prophets are at odds with those prophets who prophesy un-  
 failing  $\square 17\psi$ . The cult would be an appropriate setting  
 for these proclamations of  $\square 17\psi$  and thus we may see here  
 evidence of official cultic prophets, but this supports the  
 contention that Jeremiah himself did not hold a cultic office.  
 The main evidence for cultic prophecy, the oracular elements  
 in the Pss., is found to be inconclusive, in that they could  
 come from priests rather than prophets. From an examination  
 of some of the Psalms which Mowinckel considers to contain  
 prophetic elements, it is argued that the style and functions  
 there evidenced are more priestly than prophetic. If, how-  
 ever, cultic prophecy is the explanation of these elements,  
 then such prophecy would seem to be of a different type from  
 canonical prophecy, issuing from a different understanding  
 of the prophetic task. The cultic prophet's function is to  
 secure weal for Israel; the canonical prophet's function  
 is to proclaim Yahweh's message to Israel, whether it be one  
 of weal or woe.

Alternative suggestions for a prophetic office are un-  
 convincing. The notion of the canonical prophet as 'law-  
 speaker' has little to support and much to oppose it. It  
 is doubtful whether such an office existed and even more  
 doubtful whether any of the canonical prophets held it. The  
 proclamation of the law was a priestly task. The prophets  
 proclaimed the law, in the sense of God's will and word, but  
 this proclamation went beyond the cultic framework and lacked  
 defined limits. Intercession was a prophetic function, in  
 that prophets performed it, but again this was not bound to  
 the cult. In the cult, a favourable reply was expected,

whilst the intercessions of Amos and Jeremiah reveal that an unfavourable reply could be given. This intercessory function was linked to the prophet's chief function of proclaiming God's word.

Dt.18:15-22 militates against the idea that there was an institutional prophetic office. Rather it indicates an attempt to give the prophet, without permanent and established powers, an authority comparable to that of the other office-bearers, judge, king, and priest. Unless the hypothesis of an amphictyonic covenant-mediator is accepted, a presentation of the prophetic rôle and not an historical reality is all that Dt.18 represents. It is, therefore, not helpful in understanding the canonical prophets, except in so far as Deuteronomistic editing is evident in their books, where this peculiar presentation of their rôle may also occur.

Chapter IV concerns the prophet's own conception of his 'office', as distinct from the offices rejected in chapter III. There is little in Am. to suggest that the prophet had a cultic position, even where cultic forms of speech are employed. The forms are not exclusively cultic and the content of the messages so expressed breaks the bounds of what we know to have been declared in the cult. Other passages show Amos's criticism of the cult of his day and make it even more unlikely that he held any cultic office. Jeremiah's 'Confessions' are reminiscent of the traditional lament in form and content, but also go beyond it. There are no indications of cultic involvement, let alone office, in the sense of institutional appointment with defined functions. Rather the 'Confessions' reflect the efforts of a man to work

out what it meant to be a prophet, and all that is clear to him is his divine appointment and compulsion to proclaim Yahweh's word. The call narrative in Jer. suggests the existence of a call form. This form contains few cultic motifs and its purpose seems to be to authenticate the message and legitimate the messenger who lacks human authority and status. The stress is on the irresistible constraint to proclaim Yahweh's word which characterises the canonical prophet, as also illustrated in the formulas introducing his message. That the narrative is preserved with a purpose in no way diminishes the reality of the experience of call, but rather emphasises that the prophet understood himself to be Yahweh's messenger. There are motifs and terms here which are applied not exclusively to the prophet but also to the nation. Nonetheless, the prophet is set apart in his relationship to God and in his task of proclaiming his word.

That the office of the canonical prophet is that of being Yahweh's messenger is further argued in the concluding chapter. The prophet stands in a unique position because of his 'knowledge of Yahweh'. The purpose of his prophetic experience lies in his reception of the word which he has to declare to the people who lack true 'knowledge of Yahweh'. Am.7:10-17 is examined as an illustration of the conflict which arises because the canonical prophet has no institutional office whilst claiming an 'office' from God. When challenged, the prophet has to declare what he is about and why, and thus we have here insight into the prophet's understanding of his office. The prophet refers to his call to



proclaim a message of judgement to Israel. In reply to the institutional authority of the priest, he can only appeal to the authority given to him by Yahweh, which is beyond proof and yet also beyond question. Throughout the thesis it is argued that for the canonical prophet the reception and delivery of Yahweh's word is of paramount importance. It is suggested that in Am.7:10-17 we see the canonical prophet's office, the supreme office of being Yahweh's messenger.

A brief consideration of ancient Near Eastern parallels further suggests that the canonical prophet of Israel was a distinctive, non-professional, divinely commissioned messenger.

## PREFACE

There has been a general move since the rise of the religionsgeschichtliche Schule to relate Israelite literature and religion to the ancient Near Eastern environment. This has been done also in the study of the prophets, so that the phenomena of prophecy in Israel have been investigated in the light of similar phenomena among Israel's neighbours. But, of course, prophecy in the broadest sense may be compared with similar movements in many ages and many parts of the world (so Lindblom).

At the same time, there has been a tendency in scholarship, not only to recognise the similarities of Israelite prophecy with 'prophecy' of other cultures, but to acknowledge dissimilarities within Israelite prophecy, e.g., were there professional and non-professional, cultic and non-cultic prophets?

The aim of this thesis is to consider whether any or all of these Israelite prophets can be said to have held a prophetic 'office', a term now commonly (though often indiscriminately) used in the study of the prophets. Our main concern is with the canonical prophets and, since the scope of the enquiry is so large, particular attention is directed to Amos and Jeremiah. It cannot, of course, be assumed that the canonical prophets constituted a homogeneous group. There arises at many points in the discussion the difficulty of definition, and 'canonical' is being used here because it at least clearly denotes the prophets with whom we are chiefly concerned, viz., those whose prophetic message has been preserved in that part of the Hebrew Canon which is known as



<sup>Latter</sup>  
the ~~Former~~ Prophets.<sup>1</sup>

While external parallels are illuminating (and these will be considered in the appendix), it is a sound methodological rule to understand prophecy (and any other Israelite religious phenomena) first and foremost within its own context rather than from without,<sup>2</sup> and this approach will be followed in the ensuing discussion.

A firm foundation cannot be laid for such an enquiry unless there is reasonable clarity about the terminology employed in the OT texts. We attempt, therefore, in chapter I to provide an analysis and interpretation of the terminology relevant to prophets and their activities. In chapter II an attempt will be made to clarify the use of the terms often applied to prophetic 'types', viz., 'ecstatic', 'institutional', 'cultic', and 'false', and to enquire whether there is any evidence of official, in the sense of institutionally appointed, prophets in ancient Israel, particularly in the early period.

Chapter III will consider prophetic functions and their setting, in an effort to determine whether any or all of these functions constitute an 'office'. The main interest here is with the canonical prophets and, in particular, Amos and Jeremiah. In recent scholarship there have been various suggestions of prophetic office(s), notably in the cult. The

1. Terms such as 'classical' are employed in different ways by different scholars. Some, for instance, equate classical with canonical, and call all prophecy before Amos 'early' (see below, ch.II, p.92); whilst such content may be given to the term 'classical' (for example, that characterised by i) appeal for undivided allegiance to Yahweh and ii) speaking out against the corruption in national and foreign policy) that Elijah becomes classical along with the canonical prophets, Amos, Jeremiah, etc., whilst the canonical Deutero-Isaiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, with their different concern and emphasis, become non-classical.
2. See, e.g., Johnson, 'Living Issues in Biblical Scholarship: Divine Kingship and the Old Testament', Exp.T. 62, 1950/1, p.41.

term 'cultic prophet' will be explored, in order to decide firstly whether such prophets existed and secondly whether the canonical prophets can be said to have been cultic prophets. Three sets of passages will be examined:-

i) those in Chr. which link prophets or prophetic activity with the cult; ii) those in Jer. which suggest cultic links for prophets and/or for Jeremiah. We shall consider Jeremiah's relation to other prophets, their respective positions, tasks, and message, and the relation between prophets and priest, in respect of position, function, and inspiration; iii) those in the Pss. which may indicate prophetic activity in the cult. We shall consider four other suggested offices for the canonical prophet, those of messenger, watchman, spokesman, and then, in more detail, intercessor. Finally, we shall ask what Dt.18 tells us about the appropriateness or otherwise of the use of the term 'office' for the canonical prophets.

In chapter IV, the enquiry concerns the forms of prophetic speech and what they indicate about the prophet's position and function(s), his relationship with God and his fellowmen. We shall consider particular examples:-

i) passages in Am. which may have a cultic background and may, therefore, indicate that Amos held a cultic office, and passages which relate to Amos's attitude to the cult; ii) the 'Confessions' of Jeremiah, asking how far these are bound to or go beyond a cultic Sitz im Leben and what they suggest about Jeremiah's 'office'; iii) the call narrative in Jeremiah with what this indicates about the prophet's position and function(s).

In the fifth chapter, we shall ask whether it is reasonable to use the term 'office' at all in connection with the canonical prophets. We shall consider the relation of the canonical prophets to tradition and what, if anything, set them apart from the nation as a whole. Detailed consideration will be given to Am.7:10-17 and what this tells us of the prophet's 'office'.

I am deeply indebted to Professor G.W. Anderson for the generous and diligent supervision which I have received at every stage in the preparation of this study. I also wish to express my sincere thanks to Dr A.G. Auld for his help and his encouragement.

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	= Anchor Bible
ANE	= Ancient Near East
<u>ANET</u>	= <u>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the OT</u> , ed. J.B. Pritchard, Princetown, 1950.
<u>ASTI</u>	= <u>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</u>
ATD	= Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AV	= Authorised Version
<u>BASOR</u>	= <u>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</u>
BDB	= F. Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs, <u>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the OT</u> , Oxford, 1907.
BEv Th	= Beihefte Evangelische Theologie.
<u>BJRL</u>	= <u>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</u>
BKAT	= Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament
BWANT	= Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BWAT	= Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament
BZAW	= Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CB	= Century Bible
CBC	= Cambridge Bible Commentary
<u>CPAI</u>	= <u>The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel</u>
ET	= English Translation
<u>Ev Th</u>	= <u>Evangelische Theologie</u>
<u>Exp T</u>	= <u>Expository Times</u>
FRLANT	= Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<u>G-K</u>	= <u>Gesenius's Hebrew Grammar</u> , ed. E. Kautzsch, ET, 2nd edition, Oxford, 1910
GUOS	= Glasgow University Oriental Society
HAT	= Handbuch zum Alten Testament
<u>HDB</u>	= <u>Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible</u> , 5 vols., Edinburgh, 1898-1904
<u>HTR</u>	= <u>Harvard Theological Review</u>
<u>HUCA</u>	= <u>Hebrew Union College Annual</u>
ICC	= International Critical Commentary
<u>IJT</u>	= <u>Indian Journal of Theology</u>
IOSOT	= International Organisation for the Study of the OT
<u>JBL</u>	= <u>Journal of Biblical Literature</u>
<u>JTS</u>	= <u>Journal of Theological Studies</u>
<u>K-B</u>	= L. Köhler and W. Baumgartner, <u>Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros</u> , Leiden, 1953

LUÅ	= Lunds universitets årsskrift
LXX	= Septuagint
MT	= Massoretic Text
NCB	= New Clarendon Bible
NEB	= New English Bible
NT	= New Testament
OT	= Old Testament
OTL	= Old Testament Library
OTS	= <u>Oudtestamentische Studiën</u>
PAI	= <u>Prophecy in Ancient Israel</u>
PIW	= <u>The Psalms in Israel's Worship</u>
PsSt	= <u>Psalmenstudien</u>
RGG	= <u>Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</u> , 3rd edition, Tübingen, 1957ff.
RSV	= Revised Standard Version
RV	= Revised Version
SATA	= <u>Die Schriften des Alten Testaments in Auswahl</u>
SBT	= Studies in Biblical Theology
SJT	= <u>Scottish Journal of Theology</u>
SVT	= Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
TBC	= Torch Bible Commentary
TDNT	= <u>Theological Dictionary of the NT</u> , ET, ed. G. Friedrich, Michigan, 1968.
TEH	= Theologische Existenz heute
Th St	= <u>Theologische Studien</u>
ThZ	= <u>Theologische Zeitschrift</u>
TLZ	= <u>Theologische Literaturzeitung</u>
UUÅ	= Uppsala universitets årsskrift
VT	= <u>Vetus Testamentum</u>
Vulg	= Vulgate
WMANT	= Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WuD	= Wort und Dienst
ZAW	= <u>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</u>
ZDMG	= <u>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</u>
ZThK	= <u>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</u>

## CHAPTER I

### THE TERMINOLOGY OF PROPHECY

It is both obvious and inevitable that any consideration of the terms applied to prophetic figures and their activity will involve a consideration of the functions ascribed to these figures. Not only is it the case that some of the terms themselves denote particular experiences or activities, e.g.,  $\eta\hat{\sigma}\pi$ , which refers, though not exclusively, to visionary experience of some kind; but since the etymology of the terms is peculiarly unhelpful in understanding the nature of prophecy, it is the use of these terms as they appear in particular contexts and in connection with particular functions that allows us to come to any understanding of what prophecy, in fact, is.

It is equally clear, however, that, in discussing prophetic functions, certain terms will be used, and it is imperative that these terms be explored and some conclusions reached about the use of them at the outset. As will become all too plain, certain terms cannot be identified with certain 'types' of prophetic figures and activity. Nonetheless, the terminology of prophecy does tell us something about what was regarded as 'prophetic' and it is the purpose of this chapter to consider this.

There is, therefore, no attempt made here to give an exhaustive survey of these terms, their derivation and meaning. The two-fold object is rather to clear the ground for a discussion of prophetic functions - which forms the main subject of the thesis - by giving content to the terms



which will appear in this discussion, and to consider what these terms tell us, if anything, about prophetic experience and, more importantly, about the position or status of the prophet in Israelite society.

As will be argued later in more detail when considering the functions of the Israelite prophet, it is simply not possible to ignore the prophet's experience and to concentrate entirely on his message. But again it is stressed that it is not the aim of this chapter to explore carefully the varieties of revelatory experience. The subject of ecstasy, for instance, is in itself enormous and can only be touched on here. The importance of each of the many aspects of prophetic study involved here, all important in their own right, depends in this instance on their relevance to the enquiry about the office and functions of the Israelite prophet.

In the first section of the chapter, attention will be directed to the nouns which are applied to prophetic persons. These are a) *רֹאֶה* , b) *חֲזֹן* , c) *אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים* , d) *נָבִיא* , and e) *בֶּן־הַנְּבִיאִים* . Other terms are sometimes included in such a list, for instance *עֹבֵד יְהוָה* and *כֹּלֵאֵךְ יְהוָה* ;<sup>1</sup> but these do not belong to the same category, i.e., words which are in the OT regularly applied to prophetic persons. Nonetheless, the two mentioned here are important and their significance will be considered in

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1. See A.B. Davidson, *OT Prophecy*, pp. 79f. and in *HDB*, IV, p. 113; cf. Muilenburg in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, 412b,c.

later chapters. As we shall see, there is considerable overlapping in both the usage and the meaning of the five terms listed above. This makes it difficult to treat each term separately, and, indeed, the nature of the problem of terminology as such suggests that comparison between the terms as each is discussed is not only inevitable but also necessary. This is particularly marked with regard to the first two terms, which are both used to denote 'seer'. Moreover, some have argued that they are, in fact, synonymous. They will, therefore, be taken together.

In the second section of the chapter, attention will be given to the verbs and then to the nouns which describe prophetic activity. These are chiefly the verbal forms from  $\text{רָא}$  and the nouns  $\text{רֹאֵה}$  and  $\text{רֹאִי}$ .

#### i) Nouns applied to prophetic persons

##### a) $\text{רֹאֵה}$ and b) $\text{רֹאִי}$

These two nouns are related to the verbs  $\text{רָא}$  and  $\text{רָאָה}$  respectively. The former is the most frequently used word in the OT for 'to see' and is used in the wider sense of apprehension in general. The root appears also in post-biblical Hebrew, biblical Aramaic, Moabite, Arabic, and Ethiopic. The latter verb occurs less frequently in the OT, and nearly always in poetical contexts. It is used of both physical and mental vision, and of the 'seer's' perception. The root appears in Aramaic, Arabic, and Ugaritic.

$\text{רֹאֵה}$  is used chiefly of Samuel (1 Sam.9:9,11,18,19; 1 Chr.9:22; 26:28; 29:29). Hanani is twice called  $\text{רֹאֵה}$



(2 Chr.16:7,10), and the term also occurs in Isa.30:10 (נִחֲדָשׁ). Lindblom speaks as if there existed in the ancient Near Eastern world a seer 'type', and, therefore, comments on the references to Hanani as נִחֲדָשׁ that 'there is nothing in what is told of him that recalls the appearance and behaviour of a "seer"', and he says that we must ask 'whether there existed in Israel,..."seers" (in the religious-historical sense of the word)...'.<sup>1</sup> The possible parallels in the ancient Near East to this and other prophetic types are dealt with briefly in an appendix to this thesis; but for our present purpose it is better simply to go straight to the Hebrew words themselves and to look at particular usages of them.

The chief source for our knowledge of Samuel as a נִחֲדָשׁ is the narrative in 1 Sam.9. There we see a figure who knew and could reveal secrets and was endowed with divine gifts. He was held in honour and all that he spoke was sure to prove true. He was found at the high place, blessing the sacrifice.<sup>2</sup>

Much has been made of the note in 1 Sam.9:9, 'Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to נִחֲדָשׁ (the seer)"; for he who is now called נִחֲדָשׁ (a prophet) was formerly called a seer'.<sup>3</sup> Lindblom

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1. Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel, pp.88f.

2. Ibid., p.89, where Lindblom adds (p.90), 'The description is that of an ordinary diviner of the seer type'.

3. For a succinct survey of theories advanced on the meaning of this text, see Rowley, 'The Nature of OT Prophecy in the Light of Recent Study', The Servant of the Lord, pp.105ff.

writes, 'It is not very likely that this remark indicates merely a change in the mode of expression; it rather implies an observation concerning historic facts: in earlier times there existed in Israel professional seers in the strict sense; now they no longer exist; their functions in Israelite society as explorers of secret things are now taken over by the prophets'.<sup>1</sup> Rowley, however, objects that 'if the seer had ceased to exist as a type, there would have been no need to restyle him a nābhi' or indeed to call him anything at all'. Rather, he thinks, there continued to be religious persons of the type once distinguished from the nēbhi'im as "seers" [e.g., Isa.30:10], but a less precise age failed to distinguish them'.<sup>2</sup> The text certainly suggests what we know to be the case, that ח'ל came to embrace other terms used of prophetic figures, thus making difficult any distinction between them. Whether or not there is implied here an original distinction between the ח'ל and the נחל is debated. Rowley thinks that the text does not of itself establish that the ח'ל and the נחל were originally two distinct types.<sup>3</sup> The point

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1. Lindblom, op.cit., p.95; cf. Hertzberg, 1 and 2 Samuel, p.82; and T.H. Robinson, Prophecy and the Prophets, p.35.
  2. Rowley, op.cit., p.107. He draws attention to the slightly different text of the LXX which yields, 'the people used to call a prophet a seer', which Rowley then takes to mean simply that נחל was a popular name for the ח'ל, but which some interpret as meaning, the person called prophet (in the narrator's day) was formerly called seer, e.g., Eppstein, 'Was Saul also among the Prophets?', ZAW, 81, 1969, p.296, note 52.
  3. op.cit., p.105 and see his note 4, where he cites those who contest the view that these were two separate classes.

has been made, however, that whilst the verse itself simply identifies prophet and seer, indicating either that the terms are fully synonymous or that from this time on they are interchangeable, the context suggests that the latter may have been a clairvoyant (cf. vv.11,18-20; 10:2).<sup>1</sup> At the same time the terminology of seeing is in the OT frequently applied to the  $\chi'lj$  <sup>2</sup> and this warns us that a differentiation between the two is precarious.

Similar difficulties are involved in considering the other, more frequent, term for 'seer',  $\text{נִסִּי}$ . It is used of Gad (1 Sam.24:11), and many times of the prophetic figures in 1 and 2 Chr. :- of Gad (1 Chr.21:9), Iddo (2 Chr. 9:29; 12:15), Jehu (2 Chr.19:2), Asaph (2 Chr.29:30), Heman (1 Chr.25:5), and Jeduthun (2 Chr.35:15). It also occurs in 2 Kgs.17:13; Isa.28:15, and Am.7:12, and in the plural ( $\text{נִסִּיִּם}$ ) it occurs in Isa.29:10 (commonly regarded as a gloss), Mic.3:7, and 2 Chr.33:18, all in parallel to  $\text{נִסִּי}$ . The difficulties which arise spring from two facts which quickly emerge from any examination of the occurrences. Firstly, the terms appear to be used quite loosely and with some overlapping, as shown by the fact that more than one term is applied to the same person, e.g. Gad, who is referred to as  $\text{נִסִּי}$  in 1 Chr.21:9, is also referred to as

1. So Muilenburg, op.cit., 411c. See also on this text, Johnson, The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel, pp.9ff.
2. e.g., 1 Kgs.22:7,19, and the reception of revelation by later prophetic figures (who are referred to elsewhere as  $\chi'lj$ ), e.g., Jer.4:23, and see further, p.50.

אֵל (1 Sam.22:5). Secondly, though this problem may well be related to the first and the answer to both problems may lie in a common solution, the references are from different sources and different periods and it should not be assumed that each term is synonymous at all times. This is particularly true of the terms אֵל and אֵלֹהִים which may well have had a different meaning in Chr. from that which they had in Sam., for instance. We have already noted some of the suggestions made about the distinction between the terms אֵל and אֵלֹהִים. We shall now look briefly at the possible distinctions between the terms אֵל and אֵלֹהִים and then between אֵלֹהִים and אֵלֹהִים.

A.B. Davidson suggests that since the verb אֵל was the verb in common use for 'to see', the more elevated term אֵלֹהִים took its place for prophetic sight. He thinks that the terms perhaps indicated no more than that persons so named had a capacity for seeing, beyond that possessed by ordinary men. They had insight and discernment, and these were considered as special endowments from God. He admits, however, that the idea of vision, or some state of abstraction, is an invariable element in the idea, since in early times such a state almost always accompanied the exercise of the seer's function. So, he writes, 'this insight was not habitual to the seer, nor the result of superior shrewdness or mental endowments of the ordinary kind, but was attained by him only occasionally and when in particular conditions'. Thus, he continues, the truth which then dawned on his mind was called a vision ( רֵאיוֹן ) and he was said to see it. However, the phraseology that

arose in this way continued to be used in regard to the prophets and their utterances, even when no ecstatic vision preceded the oracles which they gave.<sup>1</sup>

Davidson's point that what characterised the seer, whether  $\text{נִבִּי}$  or  $\text{נִחֵן}$ , was his capacity to 'see' (i.e., his inspiration was the result of non-technical methods), is valuable. Otherwise what he says is highly inadequate, particularly with regard to the existence of two terms for the seer,  $\text{נִחֵן}$  and  $\text{נִבִּי}$ .

The fundamental question is whether the terms  $\text{נִחֵן}$  and  $\text{נִבִּי}$  are to be regarded as synonymous. The occurrence in synonymous parallelism in Isa.30:10 ( $\text{נִחֵן}$  and  $\text{נִבִּי}$ ) and the fact that Hanani is referred to in the same source once as  $\text{נִחֵן}$  (2 Chr.16:7) and then as  $\text{נִבִּי}$  (2 Chr.19:2) suggests that they were, and that the attempted distinctions between the meaning of the two terms<sup>2</sup> are improbable.<sup>3</sup> Rowley considers that the explanation for there being two different terms lies in the fact that there existed two different roots  $\text{נִחֵן}$  and  $\text{נִבִּי}$ , of Arabic and Aramaic origin respectively.<sup>4</sup> Johnson asserts that comparative

1. A.B. Davidson, OT Prophecy, pp.82f. and in HDB, IV, p.108. Striking parallels to prophetic visionary experiences are presented at length by Guillaume in Prophecy and Divination among the Hebrews and other Semites, pp.117-128.
2. See, e.g. Jastrow, 'Rô'eh und Hôzēh', JBL, 28, 1909, pp.42-56; and Hänel, Das Erkennen Gottes bei den Schriftpropheten, pp.7ff.
3. So Rowley, *op.cit.*, p.106.
4. *Ibid.* He is here following the suggestion of van den Oudenrijn, 'De vocabulis quibusdam, termino nābhī' synonymis', Biblica, 6, 1925, pp.304f.



study does suggest a slight difference in emphasis in the use of these two roots; that the root  $\text{נָסַח}$  seems to be used rather more than the root  $\text{נָחַח}$  with reference to visions in the secondary sense of the term, i.e., of auditory rather than strictly visual phenomena.<sup>1</sup> Yet, he concedes, the distinction may not be pressed and both the  $\text{נָחַח}$  and the  $\text{נָסַח}$  are credited with extraordinary experiences of both a visual and an auditory kind.<sup>2</sup>

It would seem that not only must the distinction between  $\text{נָסַח}$  and  $\text{נָחַח}$  not be pressed, but also that between  $\text{נָסַח}$  and  $\text{נָבִיא}$ . If it is accepted that  $\text{נָסַח}$  and  $\text{נָחַח}$  are synonymous terms for seer, then the question concerns the distinction between the  $\text{נָחַח}$  and  $\text{נָסַח}$  (seer) on the one hand and the  $\text{נָבִיא}$  (prophet) on the other. This, of course, was the question raised by 1 Sam.9:9, where  $\text{נָחַח}$  and  $\text{נָבִיא}$  occur. Such texts as 2 Kgs.17:13, where  $\text{נָסַח}$  and  $\text{נָבִיא}$  occur, perhaps favour the view that there were two separate types, the seer and the prophet, and, as we have seen, some interpret 1 Sam.9:9 as evidence of this. What then would be the distinction between these two types of prophetic figure? T.H. Robinson suggested that the nabi functioned spontaneously while the seer worked to order, and that the nabi was ecstatic while the seer was not.<sup>3</sup>

Mowinckel says that the 'seers' represent the more institutional type and thus the more technically oriented diviners

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1. Johnson, CPAI, pp.12-14.

2. Ibid., pp.14f.

3. T.H. Robinson, op.cit., p.220.

and the 'prophets' represent the ecstatic, free, spirit-inspired type.<sup>1</sup> Engnell rejects such a distinction. Both, he asserts, are ecstasies, even if there is a difference in the degree of the ecstatic experience, and both are 'organised', in the sense of being in communities and connected with the cult. He writes, '...as far as we are able to judge from the meagre references in the Old Testament and relevant comparative material, all these distinctions are artificial and cannot be supported by an objective interpretation of the pertinent texts'.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Lindblom says that it is not easy to draw a definite dividing line between the 'seer' and the 'prophet' either in the pagan world or in ancient Israel.<sup>3</sup> He rejects the standpoints of both Junker,<sup>4</sup> who reduces the differences between 'prophet' and 'seer' to a minimum, and Hölischer,<sup>5</sup> who says that 'seers' and 'prophets' were quite different. For, although Lindblom regards ecstasy as the more characteristic medium for the prophet to receive knowledge, and other means, such as nocturnal visions,

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1. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, pp.9ff. As we shall see in ch.III, Mowinckel neither makes nor keeps these distinctions absolutely clear.

2. Engnell, 'Prophets and Prophetism in the OT', Critical Essays on the OT, p.126.

3. Lindblom, op.cit., p.93. He draws attention to the figure of Balaam in Num.22-24 in whom, according to Lindblom (pp.91f.), we find features which are typical of the seer (as found in the ancient Near East in general, for instance, the Arabic kahin) and the ecstatic, such as is found in 1 Sam.10.

4. Junker, Prophet und Seher in Israel, pp.77f.

5. Hölischer, Die Profeten, pp.125ff.

dreams, external omens, to be more characteristic of the seer, he points out that seers can obtain their extraordinary knowledge in a trance as well as by other means and the prophet may occasionally use the methods and do the work of the seer.<sup>1</sup>

Certain differences of designation persisted throughout the centuries, e.g., Iddo is both  $\text{יִדּוֹ}$  (2 Chr.13:22) and  $\text{יִיִּט}$  (2 Chr.12:15), but unfortunately these cannot give us precision in terms of the particular and functional interrelations between prophetic figures. As Eppstein writes, 'A precise and consistent differentiation is impossible in view of inconsistent Biblical usage and the introduction of altered terminology at various stages of the tradition. The Biblical usage is irremediably confused, though some distinction is clearly indicated, as in 1 Chr.29:29 where one reads that "the former and latter things of David the king are recorded in the words of Samuel, the rô'āe, and in the words of Gad, the hozāe"...'.<sup>2</sup> Eppstein suggests that in 2 Chr.29:25, where Gad and Nathan are said to have advised David in cult procedures, Nathan's being given the title  $\text{יִיִּט}$ , whilst Gad is merely designated 'the king's  $\text{יִיִּט}$ ', indicates that the former is an official like Samuel though of lesser authority, while the latter is

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1. Lindblom, op.cit., p.94; cf. Johnson, CPAI, p.10, where he says that the evidence adduced by Hölscher concerning the respective methods of inspiration of seer and prophet 'is far too vague and circumstantial to justify so nice a distinction, which seems rather artificial'.

2. Eppstein, op.cit., p.296, note 54.



a personal attendant gifted with clairvoyance. In view of his own statement of caution about differentiating on the grounds of terminology, this inference can surely be no more than tentative.<sup>1</sup> The fact that more than one term is used of the same person and the fact that  $\chi'2]$  came increasingly to be used rather than  $\eta\pi$  and  $\eta\chi$  could suggest not so much a differentiation in status and function between prophetic figures so designated as that the terms may have been used loosely and that the functions related to the three terms,  $\chi'2]$  ,  $\eta\chi$  , and  $\eta\pi$  overlapped or were combined.

Eppstein's reference to  $\eta\pi$  as a lesser title than  $\chi'2]$  brings us to Am.7:12,14 and brief mention must be made of the occurrence of these terms in vv.12,14, respectively. Some scholars would see here a deliberate rejection on the part of Amos of the term  $\eta\pi$  in favour of  $\chi'2]$  , in which case  $\eta\pi$  would be, on Amaziah's lips, a derogatory or, at any rate, a lesser title.<sup>2</sup> Alternatively, it has been suggested that  $\eta\pi$  was the prophet of the South, in which case, Amaziah could be objecting that the Southern prophet had no right to usurp the position of the Northern nebiim

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1. TDNT offers the valuable comment that the sources do not provide the right kind of material for an institutional understanding, and, therefore, any conjectures must be advanced with caution, p.802. On Nathan and Gad and their position and function, see below, ch.II, pp.65-69.
  2. This line is followed by Cohen, 'Amos was a Navi', HUCA, 32, 1961, pp.175-178, who wants to understand v.14 - 'No! I am indeed a nabi (prophet), but not a ben nabi (professional prophet)'. For further references and full discussion of this passage, see below, ch.V, pp.513ff.

and Amos would be referring in his reply to his special call which enabled him to prophesy in the North.<sup>1</sup> It is also possible to understand חֲזֵן as a reference to Amos's visions. So Mays, for instance, says that it was an alternative term for prophet (נָבִיא) in the eighth century 'testifying to the experience of visions among the prophets and to one of the roots of the office in the ancient profession of seer of earlier times'.<sup>2</sup>

Useful as these distinctions might be in interpreting Am.7:10-17, the fact remains that they are unsupported by textual evidence. What the Biblical material suggests is either that usage was inconsistent or changing, or that the terms and functions of prophetic persons overlapped, or both.

c) אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים or אִישׁ חֲזֵן

It has been said that this term indicates that the prophet was one who was thought to be more closely related to God than other men;<sup>3</sup> but this is to misunderstand the force of the construct-absolute relationship here which is not possessive but descriptive. It implies first and foremost a qualification. The man of God is so called because divine qualities are bestowed upon him. He has a special relationship to God and, therefore, is a channel of the divine power.<sup>4</sup> The title is given to 'prophets',

1. So J. Lust, in a paper read to the IOSOT, Edinburgh, 1974, 'The hozeh, the Prophet of the South'.

2. Mays, Amos, p.136.

3. So Davidson, OT Prophecy, p.79, and in HDB, IV, p.113.

4. So Lindblom, op.cit., p.60 and Muilenburg, op.cit., 412a. Davidson's suggestion that the phrase attributes a moral character to the prophet is probably invalid.

particularly Elijah (1 Kgs.17:18; 2 Kgs.1:10) and Elisha (2 Kgs.4:7,9,21; 8:2ff.,11; 13:19), though the chief stress lies, according to Lindblom, not upon the ability of the man to deliver God's message, but 'upon his sharing the divine attributes'.<sup>1</sup> Being 'a man of God', a prophet brings with him good fortune (2 Kgs.8:1ff.) or possibly bad fortune (1 Kgs.17:17f.). As 'men of God', prophets are sacrosanct and must not be disobeyed (e.g. 1 Kgs.20:35f.), insulted or ignored (2 Kgs.2:23f.). But the use of the term is not reserved for 'prophetic' persons. So Moses is called 'man of God' (Dt.33:1; Josh.14:6, though it should be noted that he is also called 'prophet', in Dt.18:15; 34:10; Hos.12:14), as is David (2 Chr.8:14; Neh.12:24).<sup>2</sup> In one sense, therefore, the old view that **אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים** implied a special relationship to God is correct, for it is clearly not a technical term denoting particular functions. But, as indicated, this special relationship rests on the man's being endowed with divine power rather than on his being particularly godly in any moral sense. It is in this way that he is 'a holy man of God' (2 Kgs.4:9).

That it is not a clearly defined term is further shown

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1. Lindblom, op.cit., p.61.

2. It may be noted that these are all late passages, and the application of this term to Moses and to David would seem to indicate a 'bringing in' of these figures by the Deuteronomistic school and the Chronicler, respectively. Therefore, the use of the term for Moses and David is not historical in the sense in which it is used of Elijah and Elisha. On the use of the term 'prophet' for Moses, see below, pp.21f.

by the fact that it is used interchangeably with other terms applied to prophetic persons. Samuel, for instance, is called both אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים (1 Sam.9:6) and נָבִי (1 Sam.9:11). 1 Kgs.13 tells of a 'man of God' from Judah, but designates his colleague in Bethel as אִישׁ (v.11), and then goes on to cancel out the distinction by making the man from Judah say, 'I too am a nabi as you are' (v.18).

All this makes it clear that our use of the term 'prophets' gives the impression of a uniformity which did not, in fact, exist. von Rad writes, 'We can be perfectly sure that, if the sources use a number of different terms for prophet, this indicates in the last analysis that there were different kinds of prophets and different kinds of prophecy'. There were, he contends, several diverse elements characteristic of the nebiim even at their earliest appearances in the OT, for, he asks, what did the bands of ecstasies have in common with Nathan, apart from the title nabi?<sup>1</sup>

As we have seen, the fluctuation of terms employed warns us against regarding any specific text as an altogether direct reflection of what the actual usage was. Involved in this are the narrators' own preconceptions and the milieu in which the texts originated. Nor need the terms always have meant the same in different places and at different times.

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1. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.10. The application of the term אִישׁ to Nathan is chiefly in the Succession Narrative and in 1 and 2 Chr. (e.g., 2 Sam.12:25; 1 Kgs. 1:8; 1 Chr.29:29). What one makes of the significance of the application of the term to Nathan depends, of course, on one's view of the dating and editing of these passages; cf. above, p. 7, and on Nathan as אִישׁ see below, ch.II, p.65.

The chief difficulty is caused by the increasing use of the term  $\chi' \beth$  which resolved the differences. As von Rad puts it, 'the main obstacle to a clearer understanding of the position during the early period is a semantic one - for within a very short period every kind of prophet was included in the general term nabi.... We cannot say for certain to which of the manifestations of prophecy the term was originally attached, and to which of them it was later transferred'.<sup>1</sup>

It now remains to look at this term, the one most commonly applied to prophetic persons.

d)  $\chi' \beth$

It is often claimed that the Greek word  $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\eta\varsigma$  contains the ideas of both the foreteller and the forth-teller,<sup>2</sup> and in this way tells us something about the nature of prophecy and what it meant to be a prophet. But far more important and more debatable is the etymology of the Hebrew noun which underlies the overwhelming majority of occurrences of  $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\eta\varsigma$  in the LXX.<sup>3</sup> This cannot, of course, be divorced from a consideration of the verbal

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1. Ibid., p.12.

2. See TDNT, VI, pp.783f., and Engnell, op.cit., pp.124f.

3. See TDNT, pp.796,812. LXX sometimes renders a)  $\eta\chi\gamma$  and b)  $\eta\delta\pi$  by  $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\eta\varsigma$  :- a) 1 Chr.26:28; 2 Chr. 16:7,10; cf. also Isa.30:10, where  $\eta\chi\gamma$  becomes  $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\eta\varsigma$ , b) 2 Chr.19:2; 29:30; 35:15. Otherwise LXX renders  $\eta\delta\pi$  as  $\delta\beta\lambda\epsilon\pi\omega\nu$  (1 Chr.9:22; 29:29) or  $\delta\delta\epsilon\omega\nu$  (1 Chr. 21:9; 2 Chr.9:19; 12:15; 29:25; 33:18,19), or  $\delta\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\kappa\rho\upsilon\delta\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$  (1 Chr.25:5). LXX renders  $\eta\delta\pi$  in Isa.30:10 by  $\omicron\iota\tau\alpha\delta\epsilon\delta\mu\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\epsilon\omega\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ .



forms coming from the noun, but since these are derivative they cast no light at all on the meaning of the noun itself and their own meaning and use will be considered later.

What then is the etymology of  $\text{X}'\text{ll}$  ?

It was formerly held that **אִנִּי** is derived from the verb **אָנַח**, to bubble forth, to pour out (e.g. Prov.18:4 - **אִנִּי נַחֵל**, a bubbling brook), and it was said, therefore, to describe the ecstatic character of inspiration.<sup>1</sup>

The alternative suggestion is that  $\text{X}^{\text{N}}$  is related to a Semitic root which occurs in Arabic as naba'a and in Accadian as nabu. The former means 'to announce' and the latter 'to call'; but if this suggestion is accepted there is then the question of whether the form is to be taken in an active or a passive sense. König, following the Arabic etymology takes it in an active sense and so takes  $\text{X}^{\text{N}}$  to mean 'announcer'.<sup>2</sup> The form which occurs in the Hebrew is the qāṭīl which is usually passive, but the qāṭīl form can be employed to express activity, as in  $\text{T}^{\text{P}}\text{P}$  (over-seer),<sup>3</sup> or in this instance the form could mean one who is in the state of announcing a message which has been given to him. 'He is the passive recipient of something which is manifested in his condition as well as in his speech, just as an 'āsīr, a prisoner, is the passive object of imprisonment or bonds and manifests his state in his

1. See Gesenius, Thesaurus linguae Hebraeae et Chaldaeae Veteris Testamenti, II, ii, p.838a.

2. König, Hebräisches und aramäisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament, p.260b.

3. Ibid.; cf. Barth, Die Nominalbildung in den semitischen Sprachen, p.184, para.125e; and G-K, 84<sup>a1</sup>.

person'.<sup>1</sup> If the Accadian etymology is followed, then taking the Hebrew form in the passive sense gives 'one who is called' by God, one who has a divine vocation. This is the sense preferred, for example, by Albright, followed by Lindblom;<sup>2</sup> but it has rightly been objected that this seems to import too much 'theology' into what must have been a primitive term.<sup>3</sup> On the whole, the active sense, 'one who proclaims', is the probable signification of the word,<sup>4</sup> (since the act of proclaiming was common to all prophets whereas the experience of vocation was not), and נ'ל then becomes clearly linked with the  $\pi\rho\phi\eta\tau\eta\varsigma$  of the LXX.<sup>5</sup>

The etymology, however, remains so uncertain that the question of the meaning(s) of the term נ'ל cannot be absolutely determined by it, but only by the use of the term in the OT.<sup>6</sup> Wheeler Robinson has offered the following analysis.

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1. Guillaume, op.cit., pp.112f.
  2. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, p.231; and Lindblom, op.cit., p.102. See also TDNT, op.cit., p.796, where the passive sense is said to be more likely linguistically and is supported by the Accadian nabī'um, 'the called'.
  3. So H. Wheeler Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation in the OT, p.173, note 1.
  4. Ibid.; Eichrodt, Theology of the OT, I, p.312, note 2; and Scott, The Relevance of the Prophets, pp.44f.
  5. So, for instance, Meek, Hebrew Origins, pp.150f.; cf. Johnson, CPAI, pp.24f., note 5.
  6. Engnell, op.cit., p.125; and Wheeler Robinson, op.cit., p.173.

The occurrence of the noun falls chronologically into three distinct phases, showing developments of usage.<sup>1</sup> Firstly, in the period prior to the eighth century, נָבִיא occurs eighty-eight times, most of which refer to the recognised prophets of Yahweh, largely of the type commonly called 'ecstatics'. They frequently appear in groups (e.g. 1 Sam.10:10; 1 Kgs.22:6), but the term is also applied to prophets of a more individual kind associated with such groups, viz., Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, and to other prophets, such as Nathan, who have no such recorded association.

The majority of occurrences (viz., 168) are found in the second period, from 800-550 B.C., which Wheeler Robinson regards as the period of canonical prophecy. Whilst many of these occurrences refer to the so-called 'false' prophets, the term is used of the canonical prophets (e.g. Ezek.2:5; Hab.1:1), and it is important to recognize that נָבִיא cannot at this time have been a term referring to a particular 'type' of prophet, for instance, the 'ecstatic', since ecstatic features in this period are only peripheral.

In the third period, that of post-exilic literature, it occurs fifty-six times and its use is 'largely retrospective' (e.g. Ps.74:9 - 'there is no longer any prophet'). The prophets of the past are respected (see Zech.1:4ff.), but those of the present are no longer esteemed (see Neh.6:12).

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1. Wheeler Robinson, op.cit., pp.173-175. It corresponds to the three-phase analysis of the use of the verbal forms from נָבִיא first worked out by Jepsen, which will be considered below. It should be noted that it may, in fact, be wrong to consider the development in the use of the noun as parallel to the development of the use of the verb, or that, at any rate, the virtues and flaws of the two analyses may differ.



There are a number of weak points and assumptions in this analysis. Firstly, Wheeler Robinson does not make clear whether the chronological scheme relates to the date of the documents, or of the events described. It is more probable that he is thinking of the documents and this is perhaps suggested by his footnote that many of the passages in the third period refer to the Chronicler's alleged literary sources.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, Wheeler Robinson fails to consider redaction and to take into account questions about dating. He assumes older clearcut distinctions and consequently makes too precise a dating of passages that we cannot be sure about. He assumes, for instance, the Deuteronomic history to be early and Ps.74:9 to be late. In relation to the last passage, to say that the use of  $\chi'11$  here is 'largely retrospective' indicates nothing about the meaning of the word. Further, his suggestion that there was a third distinct phase is open to criticism, and, as we shall see, to speak of 'a period of canonical prophecy' may be misleading.<sup>2</sup>

We have already seen that  $\chi'11$  is used interchangeably with other terms for prophetic persons and that this fact, together with the fact that every kind of prophet came to be included in the general term  $\chi'11$ , presents an obstacle to a clear understanding of the  $\chi'11$ 's position and functions. There is, however, a further difficulty and

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1. Ibid., p.174, note 4.

2. See Preface, pp.vif., where the difficulty of defining what constitutes 'classical' prophecy was mentioned, and see further on the development of prophecy, ch.II.

this arises from the use of  $\text{קָרָא}$ , similar to that of  $\text{קָרָא לְאֵלֹהִים}$ , for figures who cannot be regarded as prophetic in any strict sense. An important example of this is Gen. 20:7,17, where  $\text{קָרָא}$  is applied to Abraham, and this in connection with a particular function, i.e., intercession. von Rad comments on this as follows. The designation of Abraham as a  $\text{קָרָא}$  must, he says, be explained from the viewpoint of the origin of the text, which in this case lies in prophetic circles, as they are described for us in 2 Kgs.2-4. This was a phase in which the prophetic movement was connected much more closely with the sanctuary and the cult than at the time of the major prophets. Their office at that time was less the proclamation of eschatological messages than of authorised intercession. The question here, therefore, concerns an anachronistic transposition of a cultic designation to the early period of Israel. The late period naturally thought of Abraham by analogy with its own contemporary charismatic officials. In the E source, where great significance is given to the prophet and his office, Abraham is designated  $\text{קָרָא}$  as the properly qualified mediator between God and men.<sup>1</sup> The question whether intercession is an important function of the  $\text{קָרָא}$  will be considered later,<sup>2</sup> but what is of immediate importance is the question why Abraham is here called  $\text{קָרָא}$  at all. In what sense is he a  $\text{קָרָא}$ ?

The same question arises from the use of  $\text{קָרָא}$  for Aaron (Ex.7:1), for Miriam (Ex.15:20), for Deborah (Jgs. 4:4), and, of course, for Moses (Dt.18:15; 34:10; Hos.12:14).

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1. von Rad, Genesis, p.223.

2. See below, ch.III, iid.

von Rad regards all of these as anachronisms, representing the way in which a much later age looked upon these people.<sup>1</sup> But his explanation in terms of a cultic functionary as envisaged by those responsible for the E source will not do for all these occurrences. The important point is surely that there are a number of instances when a man is called  $\chi'11$ , or a woman a  $17\chi'11$ , not in any precise sense, but as referring to their possession of a supernormal endowment or particularly close relationship to Yahweh.<sup>2</sup> It would seem, therefore, that the use of the term  $\chi'11$  for Abraham could be in a far more general sense than von Rad allows.<sup>3</sup> It could be simply a case of giving him the highest accolade.<sup>3</sup> One might go on to argue that these people could not be given the title  $17\chi$ , because a  $17\chi$  is one who holds a specific office, whereas the term  $\chi'11$  does not indicate the holder of an office, and, therefore, can be used loosely of one who is 'close to God'.

It is obvious from this that the use of the term  $\chi'11$  is of little help in determining and distinguishing prophetic functions. It is used widely and it is used loosely. The fact that behind certain occurrences of the term there lie particular points of view concerning the office and functions of the prophet<sup>4</sup> is of considerable

1. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.12.

2. So Lindblom, op.cit., p.96, note 71.

3. cf. above, p.14.

4. In addition to von Rad, see, e.g., Kuhl, The Prophets of Israel, p.9 - 'No inference is to be made from the fact that Moses and Aaron are called "prophets" (e.g. Dt.18:17; 34:10; Ex.7:1), for all such passages must be regarded as the witnesses of later ages viewing the past from their own psychological standpoint with the deliberate intention of demonstrating the great antiquity and the continuity of prophecy in Israel'.

significance and will later be considered in more detail, especially the Deuteronomic occurrences.

e) The fifth term,  $\square'x'nnh-n$ , is clearly related to  $x'nn$ , but the nature of the relationship of the prophetic persons so named is far from clear.

The term is used in 2 Kgs. 2 applied to communities which presumably are similar to those that we meet in 1 Sam. 10:5-7 and 19:8ff. and it is clear that these communities were related to the sanctuary and comprised prophetic figures of the ecstatic type. Their connection with ancient cultic centres is also evidenced in 2 Kgs.2:2f. and we find such bands living in Samaria, Gilgal, and Jericho, though what exactly they were doing there is not certain.

As already mentioned, Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha all seem to be associated with the  $\square'x'nnh-n$ . Samuel appears as their leader ( $\square'x'nn$   $\text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$  - 1 Sam.19:2a), as does Elisha (2 Kgs.4:28ff; 6:1). The term used in 2 Kgs. 4.38 is that the members of the community 'were sitting before' the leader and it is thought that such assemblies may have been for teaching purposes, when the leader would instruct the members in ecstatic exercises.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Elijah, who appears to have been for the most part independent, is related to the  $\square'x'nnh-n$  raises sharply the question of the relationship of the  $x'nn$  to the  $\square'x'nnh-n$ . Since these groups are also

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1. So von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.26, and Lindblom, op.cit., p.69, though Lindblom elsewhere doubts the historicity of this presentation of Samuel. See discussion of this, ch.II, pp.62f.

connected with the sanctuaries, the question of Elijah's relation to the sanctuaries is also raised. Some of these points must be taken up again in connection with the various 'types' of prophet and the relation of these types to the cult. But before leaving the terms  $\text{אֲנִי}$  and  $\text{אֲנִי-הַנְּבִיאִים}$  reference should be made to Am.7:14 and to what this suggests about the meaning of  $\text{אֲנִי-הַנְּבִיאִים}$ .

It has been suggested that the term implies that the office of prophet was to a considerable extent hereditary and that it drew most of its members from the families of those who were already prophets.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not heredity played a part in determining membership of the prophetic movement, the general view is that the Hebrew means groups of prophets, without any genealogical implication.

In Am.7:14, the term occurs in the singular,  $\text{אֲנִי}$ ; it is elsewhere always in the plural. Should it be understood to mean a member of the  $\text{אֲנִי-הַנְּבִיאִים}$  or could it mean something else? Ackroyd thinks that it is possible to understand  $\text{אֲנִי}$  as one having the quality which belongs to a prophet, on the analogy of  $\text{אֲנִי-הַנְּבִיאִים}$  (Ecc.10:17) where  $\text{אֲנִי}$  is employed with a noun to indicate a type of person. He believes that the plural can be understood in the same way (cf.  $\text{אֲנִי-הַנְּבִיאִים}$  which means men who have the quality of strength, in Dt.3:18; Jgs.18:2).<sup>2</sup> If this is so, then

1. Guillaume, op.cit., p.109.

2. Ackroyd, 'Amos 7:14', Exp T, vol.68, 1956/7, p.94. It may be noted, however, that one cannot literally be a son of strength in the sense in which one can be the son of a prophet. But to Ackroyd's examples may be added Gen.6:2; Ps.82:5, where the sense could be literal but, in fact, is not.



in his reply Amos has simply said the same thing twice. But, as Ackroyd also says, it also seems reasonable to understand  $\text{X}'\text{ll}^{-}\text{ll}$  in the sense of a member of a prophetic group, the  $\text{Q}'\text{X}'\text{lll}^{-}\text{ll}$  referred to elsewhere. The majority of exegetes assume this to mean, at least in Am.7:14, professional prophets, i.e. prophets who had official functions at the sanctuaries with which they were associated.<sup>1</sup> As already seen, an official cultic position cannot be assumed from the references to the  $\text{Q}'\text{X}'\text{lll}^{-}\text{ll}$ . Such persons could well be found at sanctuaries without necessarily having a cultic office there.

Now, on these grounds, it has been argued that a wedge can be driven in Am.7:14 between  $\text{X}'\text{ll}$  and  $\text{X}'\text{ll}^{-}\text{ll}$ , the second meaning a professional prophet, of a type from which Amos wants to dissociate himself. So Samuel Cohen, altering the Massoretic accentuation, translates, 'No! I am indeed a nabi (prophet), but not a ben nabi (professional prophet)'. This rendering, however, is clearly determined by a preconception of  $\text{X}'\text{ll}^{-}\text{ll}$  as a derogatory term meaning a professional, cultic prophet. Such assumptions are surely not the most useful guide to interpreting this notoriously ambiguous verse. The arguments for understanding the present or the past tense here will be discussed below (ch.V), but it can fairly be said that the most natural way of reading  $\text{X}'\text{ll}$  and  $\text{X}'\text{ll}^{-}\text{ll}$  in this verse is as parallel terms and this is so whether Amos is claiming or disclaiming these titles. If  $\text{X}'\text{ll}^{-}\text{ll}$  means a

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1. e.g., Lindblom, op.cit., pp.184f., and Cohen, op.cit., pp.175-178, and see further, ch.V, p.525.



professional prophet in this context then this surely indicates that at this particular time and in this particular place  $\text{נָבִי}$  also denoted a professional prophet, however 'professional' is to be understood.

ii) Verbs and nouns describing their activity

It was stated earlier that the verbal forms from  $\text{נָבִי}$ , being denominatives, do not shed any light on the meaning of  $\text{נָבִי}$  itself. However, the fact remains that 'prophesying' is the activity expected of and performed by the 'prophet' and these verbal forms must now be considered, in respect of what they tell us of the prophet's functions.

The verbal forms which occur are the niph'al (  $\text{נִבִּי}$  ) and the hithpa'el (  $\text{נִבְּיָא}$  ),<sup>1</sup> but in any attempt to understand their meaning it is important to recognise that this depends not on form but on usage. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that, whilst the two forms sometimes have different connotations, at other times, they are used interchangeably without distinction of meaning. How, then, are the two forms used?

The analysis made by Jepsen, indicating that the usage of the verb, like that of the noun, falls into three chronological phases, is now generally accepted.<sup>2</sup> In the

1. Guillaume differentiates between the force of the two forms as follows. 'The difference between these two forms is that the niph'al frequently describes actions which react upon the agent; it is also used of actions which the subject allows to happen to him. The hithpa'el, however, expresses the making, showing, conducting, oneself in the mode which the verb predicates,...', op.cit., p.113.
2. Jepsen, *Nabi*, p.8. See also Wheeler Robinson, op.cit., p.175; *TDNT*, pp.797-799; and Guillaume, op.cit., pp.113ff., where he gives (p.115) Jepsen's analysis of the Biblical  
(Contd.)

first phase, both the niph'al and the hithpa'el are used to describe the ecstatic condition, that is, an abnormal psycho-physical state which is displayed in uncontrolled bodily movements and utterances.<sup>1</sup> This is what is meant in 1 Sam.10 (e.g. v.10), where nothing is said of coherent, rational utterance but only of ecstatic behaviour.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that this conduct is indistinguishable from that of a madman, which is occasionally denoted by the same verb (e.g. 1 Sam.18:10; Jer.29:26) and also from that of the prophets of Baal in 1 Kgs.18.

In the second phase, there is a distinction between the two forms. The niph'al means to deliver a message and the hithpa'el to be in a state of ecstasy. At first, there is still the implication of ecstasy in the use of the niph'al so that it means to announce in an ecstasy (1 Kgs.22);<sup>3</sup> but

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Contd.) passages. We need not enter here into the question of the dating of the passages as given in Jepsen's table, though doubts about the periods to which he assigns certain passages would, of course, cast corresponding doubts on his whole thesis.

1. For a description of this, see, e.g., T.H. Robinson, op.cit., pp.31,50.
2. Though nothing explicit is said of Saul's ecstatic behaviour in 1 Sam. 10:10, that there is the suggestion of it here is supported by 1 Sam.19:23f., where the same phrase is used to indicate the coming of the spirit upon Saul (cf. 1 Sam.10:10; 19:23) and ecstatic behaviour is clearly indicated (v.24).
3. It is suggested in TDNT that in 1 Kgs.22 one may see a change and differentiation in the two verbal stems. In v.10 (וַיִּנְחֹל אֵלָיו אֱלֹהִים), the hithpa'el expresses the visible side supported by a symbolic action (v.1). But in v.12 it is said of the אֱלֹהִים : וַיִּנְחֹל אֵלָיו, where the niph'al denotes their speech, their giving of the oracle, which is obviously possible on the basis of the preceding וַיִּנְחֹל, op.cit., p.797.

in Amos, Jeremiah and Ezekiel it would seem that it denoted the announcement of the word of Yahweh without any of the old indications of intense excitement. The hithpa'el, on the other hand, as would be expected of this theme of the verb, denotes the externals of the prophetic activity.

In the last phase, both verbal forms are used with the sense of delivering a message (e.g., the hithpa'el in Jer.26:20 and the niph'al in Zech.13:3).

Jepsen and those who follow him in this analysis relate the two values which are given to the verb to the noun and its historical evolution. It would seem to be indisputable that 'the behaviour associated with a prophet in a particular age (whether ecstatic speech and action, or measured and authoritative pronouncements) determined the meaning of the verb and...the conjugation used to indicate the meaning'.<sup>1</sup>

The contention that 'the connotation of the verb developed side by side with the development of prophecy itself'<sup>2</sup> raises the whole question of the history and evolution of prophecy. This will be considered further in connection with 'types' of prophet, but the term  $\chi'11$  and the verbal forms associated with it raise acutely one particular aspect of this question which should, therefore, be discussed at this point.

In spite of the tendency of recent scholarship to concentrate attention on the prophetic message rather than on the prophetic experience on the grounds that the latter is

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1. So Guillaume, op.cit., p.113.

2. Ibid., p.114.

inaccessible to our minds and that it is impossible to contain it in our modern categories,<sup>1</sup> it is precisely in this realm that the debate about the development of OT prophecy is still largely carried out. Whilst, as we shall see, there are differences to be found between the status and the message of the early prophets and the status and message of the canonical prophets and, at the end of the day, it may well be these differences which are of the greatest significance,<sup>2</sup> it is quite impossible to consider the prophet's status and message without reference to the revelatory experiences recorded and reflected in the OT. Moreover, the relation or non-relation of canonical prophecy to nebiism is often argued in terms of the similarities and differences between the 'psychological' experiences of the two groups. Misleading as it may be to speak of early prophets and canonical prophets, as if all prophets fell neatly into one category or the other, a division will be assumed here for the purposes of comparison. Whether or

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1. Porteous, for instance, says that it is '...a mistake to assume a priori that the experience of the great prophets is directly accessible to modern psychological methods'. He thinks that the different psychological standpoint of the Hebrews, which influenced the presentation given by the authors, imposes limitations on what we can use as appropriate material for the application of modern theories and for descriptions by means of modern terminology, 'Prophecy', Record and Revelation, p. 227.
  2. For the difficulties in defining what constitutes early prophecy, see below, ch.II, p.92. It could well be that the distinction is not a chronological one. 1 Kgs.22, for instance, suggests a distinction between the מִיכָאֵל Micaiah and the other מְנַחֵם Menahem, which seems to lie in the fact that the latter prophesies what is expected of them, whilst Micaiah prophesies what God gives him to say; cf. Balaam in Num.22-24.

not one can speak of early prophets as one homogeneous group and of canonical prophets as another will, indeed, be partly decided on the basis of this discussion. The question under consideration is, what relation does early prophecy with its markedly ecstatic character, where the verbal forms from  $\lambda'11$  meant 'to rave', bear to canonical prophecy, where these forms usually meant to deliver a message and only sometimes 'to be in a state of ecstasy'?

It is, of course, possible to regard the ecstatic element as being of the essence of prophecy and so to regard the canonical prophets as essentially the same as the earlier ecstasies, in respect of their psychological experiences. So T.H. Robinson who, therefore, has no difficulty in defining the relationship between prophets of both periods. The early prophets are the direct ancestors of Amos and Jeremiah.<sup>1</sup> The fact that he finds his clearest example of this abnormal psychological state in the prophet Ezekiel indicates the major flaw in this view. For, as Eichrodt puts it, '...it is inadmissible to draw conclusions about the character of classical prophecy as a whole, and to make great play with the ecstatic element in elucidating it, simply on the basis of Ezekiel, for he is a unique phenomenon'.<sup>2</sup> This prophet seems to have been particularly predisposed to this sort of experience and behaviour and in this he is surely a throwback to the ecstatic prophet of

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1. T.H. Robinson, op.cit., pp.40ff.

2. Eichrodt, op.cit., p.341, note 1.



the earlier period rather than the typical representative of later prophecy.<sup>1</sup>

At the opposite extreme to that of Robinson is the view held, for instance, by Battenwieser, who writes, 'the inspiration of the great literary prophets has nothing in common with the ecstasy of the prophets of the older type... Nor are the visions of the literary prophets in any way akin to the ecstatic visions and dreams of the diviner'.<sup>2</sup> The relation is then, according to this view, one of sharp antithesis. But this presents many difficulties. Firstly, there is the question of why, if the noun  $\chi'11$  and the verbal forms associated with it originally denoted ecstatic prophets and ecstatic prophecy, these terms were employed of the canonical prophets?

It is, of course, possible to reply that these terms were mistakenly used in the later period by people who misunderstood the canonical prophets and what they were about. Adherents of this view would understand in Am.7:14, for instance, a repudiation by Amos of the title  $\chi'11$ , referring to the professional nebiim and their abnormal phenomena. Against the idea that  $\chi'11$  is here in any way a derogatory term is the fact that Amos elsewhere speaks of the  $\square' \chi'11$  as a direct gift of Yahweh to Israel (2:11), and the reference in 3:7 is also favourable.

One of the chief exponents of the view that the very name  $\chi'11$  does not properly belong to the canonical

1. Again, it should be noted that the distinction may not be definitively chronological and that ecstatic prophecy may have survived parallel with the other.
2. Battenwieser, The Prophets of Israel, pp.138f.



prophets is Jepsen. His view is conveniently summarised by Wheeler Robinson. Jepsen contends that early ecstatic nebiism represents 'a professional order of Canaanite origin, consisting of men possessed by the Spirit of God, and distinct from either the soothsayer and the seer on the one hand or the true "ecstatic" on the other'.<sup>1</sup> He then distinguishes between early ecstatic nebiism and later possession by the spirit of God. The canonical prophets, he argues, are not a development of this professional order and cannot be fitted into the story of the nebiim at all. The name X'11 does not properly belong to them; they lack the psychical characteristics of the X'11.

Wheeler Robinson remarks that in order to make this separation Jepsen has to deal drastically with the text. For example, he dismisses the thirty-one instances in which Jeremiah is called a X'11 as a later 'nebi'istic' redaction.<sup>2</sup>

1. Wheeler Robinson, op.cit., p.176; Jepsen, op.cit., pp.143ff. It should be noted that Wheeler Robinson does not elucidate these distinctions, which, as they stand, are decidedly odd.
2. Wheeler Robinson, op.cit., p.176. Jepsen similarly explains away the favourable references to the nebiim in Amos and in Jeremiah (p.140). The basis of his argument is that the LXX has nothing corresponding to X'11. It may be remarked, in support of Jepsen, that in nearly all the places where the MT has 'Jeremiah the prophet', the LXX simply has 'Jeremiah' or 'he', which, if we take the LXX as representing an earlier Hebrew text, suggests the pedantic addition of 'Jeremiah the prophet' and weakens the evidence for Jeremiah's self-understanding or someone else's understanding of Jeremiah as a X'11, and also brings the book of Jer. into line with other prophetic books, where X'11 seldom occurs. The six references to the Q'X'11 as Yahweh's servants in Jer. (7:25, 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4) occur in what are commonly regarded as Deuteronomistic passages. Some would go even further and regard the instances where Jeremiah is said to be a prophet or to prophesy (1:5; 19:14; 20:1, 15, 19; 33:3) as Deuteronomistic additions. That the X'11 or at least the Q'X'11 were seen by Jeremiah in a bad light, which further militates against these last references as  
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He admits the authenticity of the term in Jer.1:5 and Ezek.2:5; 33:33, but thinks that there it means no more than the spokesman of God without any relation to the social order of the nebiim. But this, as Wheeler Robinson points out, fatally weakens the whole thesis, for 'if nabi' had already attained this modified meaning by the time of the canonical prophets and could be used by them on occasion, this shows that they were not alienated by the term, but rather by the contemporary n°bi'im'.<sup>1</sup>

The point that a term need not always have been used in the same sense is an important one. As we have seen, there was a development in the usage of the verbal forms reflecting, it would seem, developments in the phenomenon of prophecy itself. This fact remains, however one regards these developments. It has been used to refute T.H. Robinson's assumption that because the canonical prophets were given the name Ḳ'Ḳ, they must have had something ecstatic about them, for even if it originally denoted an ecstatic it could have changed in its meaning.<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, it does seem difficult to accept a cleavage such as Jepsen's and reasonable to argue that the great

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Contd.) evidence of Jeremianic usage of the terms, is supported by the fact that a third of the occurrences of the term in Jer. are critical, linking the Ḳ'Ḳ with the priests (e.g. 23:11). Here the LXX makes more explicit and renders ψευδοπροφήτης. Perhaps Porteous's is the fairest comment. He states that Jepsen's thoroughgoing revision of the text is not at all points convincing. This is not to say that Jepsen is necessarily wrong, but indicates that his theory should be regarded with caution, op.cit., p.233.

1. Wheeler Robinson, op.cit., pp.176ff.
2. So Micklem, Prophecy and Eschatology, pp.25f.

prophets had something in common with the nebiim, which made it natural for men to group them together.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, the concern of the present enquiry to examine not the general differences and similarities between the early and the canonical prophets, but the differences and similarities between them in a particular realm and this realm is that of prophetic experience, and, more particularly, of prophetic ecstasy.

It is tempting to state without more ado that, if ecstasy is defined in terms of the impassioned ravings such as those described in 1 Sam.10 & 19, then we are hard pressed to find examples of ecstasy in the canonical prophets, and וְנָבִיא, if indeed it meant ecstasies, was not a suitable word for them, with the possible exception of Ezekiel. There would then be no need to consider the relation between the early ecstatic prophets and the later non-ecstatic prophets. There would be no relation, save that of the fortuitous use of the same terminology applied to them and their activity. The first objection to this is the one just mentioned, i.e., that the common use of the terminology, whatever it originally meant or came to mean, suggests that there is a relationship. The second is that this view limits the meaning of 'ecstasy' to the uncontrolled ravings of certain prophetic figures and thus leaves a vast amount of revelatory experience untouched. And it is surely the nature of revelatory experience which is at issue here. Ecstasy is the inspiration of the early

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1. It has been observed that for all the radical analysis of Jepsen's book it suffers too much from theorising based on a preconceived view of nebiism, TDNT, p.802, note 149.

prophet. What then is the inspiration of the canonical prophet? Does it bear any relation to this earlier ecstasy or is it something altogether different? Whilst not losing hold of the meaning of ecstasy as defined according to 1 Sam.10;19,etc., the whole relationship must be examined in terms of prophetic inspiration and the term 'ecstasy' perhaps widened to include other forms of prophetic experience. Whether this is so or not needs now to be considered. Certainly the essence of the debate about ecstatic and non-ecstatic prophecy is the nature of prophetic inspiration and the discussion must, therefore, be opened up.

In the narratives about early prophets, prophetic inspiration is clearly conceived of as being due to  $\pi\iota\lambda$  (spirit). In 1 Sam.10, it is not said explicitly that the prophets who were prophesying were endowed with the spirit, but it is clearly implied since it is by his encounter with these prophets that Saul receives this gift and prophesies. We are told (1 Sam.10:10) that a band of prophets met Saul:  $\text{וַתַּעֲלֶזְחַ עָלָיו רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים וַתִּנָּבֵא וַתִּזְכֹּךְ}$  (and cf. 1 Sam.19:20 where this is made explicit). As we have seen, 'to prophesy' here means not to deliver a coherent, rational message but to make the incoherent, irrational movements and sounds characteristic of the ecstatic state.

That  $\pi\iota\lambda$  was the source of prophetic ecstasy is also demonstrated by the narrative in Num.11. Here seventy elders chosen by Moses are to become, like him, endowed with the spirit, in order to help him in his administrative duties (11:16f.). In v.25 we are told that the distribution of

the spirit results in their prophesying, that is, entering into the ecstatic state. This is rather strange here, for it is difficult to imagine how Moses should be relieved of his burden by God's putting the seventy elders in a state of ecstasy.

It is, therefore, thought that the theme of Moses and his need for assistance is not the primary one here, but rather that the story is being used as an aetiological explanation of ecstatic prophecy. The additions which interrupt the main narrative come from circles of ecstatic prophecy whose wish is simply the expression of a general high esteem for 'prophecy' put into the mouth of Moses. On the other hand, there must surely be some definite event behind the Eldad-Medad episode.<sup>1</sup>

On this interpretation, the narrative shows the high estimation of ecstatic prophecy in certain circles, but it cannot be utilised as a historical record and has nothing to teach us about the real origin of ecstatic prophecy.<sup>2</sup>

This is an important observation and will be considered further in connection with the aetiological element in the narratives in 1 Sam.10;19, as they relate to the presentation

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1. The interpretation of this episode depends largely on the translation of  $\text{לְעֵלְדָּד וּלְמֵדָד}$  in v.25. Noth emends the MT  $\text{לְעֵלְדָּד}$  and renders 'unceasing'. He, therefore, believes that the elders are ecstatic prophets permanently endowed, as it were, and that the Eldad-Medad story is used as an attempt to give literary currency to the claims of prophetic groups in Israel battling for recognition. von Rad and Lindblom, on the other hand, translate 'and they did so no more' and argue that only Eldad and Medad are regarded as ecstatic; the elders merely undergo a sort of initiation as elders. In this case, the aetiological explanations are of two different institutions, not of two different groups of prophets.

2. Noth, Numbers, pp.89f.



and the estimation of ecstatic prophecy. But what is of chief importance here is the fact that ecstatic prophecy is clearly regarded as a sign of the working of the spirit. The spirit is the source of this prophetic gift.

On turning to the canonical prophets, however, one is struck by the relatively restricted use of the term **רוח** to explain their own inspiration. The pre-exilic canonical prophets do not claim it as the source of their own utterances and activity. Moreover, it can be argued, in most of these prophets the idea is not only absent but rejected. It could be, of course, that this is because the term had become somewhat discredited through its long and close association with primitive types of prophecy and with abnormal phenomena in general.<sup>1</sup> But it seems more than likely that the rejection of the term says something about their own experience. It suggests that they regard possession by the spirit as something undesirable and that they attribute their own consciousness of a vocation to a different cause.

This is argued most cogently by Sigmund Mowinckel, in his article '"The Spirit" and the "Word" in the pre-exilic reforming Prophets'.<sup>2</sup> These prophets, he says, contrast their own endowment with the spirit-endowment (e.g., Hos. 9:7) and allude to **רוח** only scornfully as the possession of the nebiim (Jer.5:13). Exceptions to this, e.g., Mic. 2:7, Mowinckel rejects as glosses or current phrases.

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1. Wheeler Robinson, op.cit., p.179.

2. In JBL, 53, 1934, pp.199-226.



He concludes, therefore, that in these prophets, 'little remains of the ecstatic element, apart from that which is the sound psychological, all-exclusive consciousness of having been called by Yahweh to deliver a religious and moral message'. 'Apart from the occasional visions and auditions to which they allude, there is nothing about the reforming prophets suggestive of any markedly ecstatic experiences in the old "frenzied" form'.<sup>1</sup>

Mowinckel has, of course, to take account of the references to  $\Pi\Gamma$  in Ezekiel. Some of these he dismisses as being references to 'wind' and to the sense of being transported from one place to another and not to the spirit of Yahweh and ecstasy in the strict sense (e.g., 3:12ff.).<sup>2</sup> But he admits that we do have in Ezekiel the ecstatic sense and the linking of prophetic inspiration with  $\Pi\Gamma$  (e.g., Ezek.11:5).<sup>3</sup>

The question which then arises is, in what way does Ezekiel's prophetic experience differ from that of the other canonical prophets? If the inspiration of these prophets is attributed not to  $\Pi\Gamma$  but to  $\gamma\Gamma$ , as Mowinckel contends, why is it that in Ezekiel we again find references to  $\Pi\Gamma$  and to  $\Pi\Gamma$  and  $\gamma\Gamma$  together?

As already mentioned, the prophet Ezekiel seems to have been particularly prone to abnormal psychological experiences. His frequent references, therefore, to Yahweh's spirit (  $\Pi\Gamma$  ) or to Yahweh's hand (  $\Gamma$  ) (e.g., 3:14,22; 8:1; 37:1) could

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1. Ibid., pp.204-207.

2. Ibid., p.208.

3. Ibid., p.200; cf. Lindblom, op.cit., p.177.

perhaps be explained by the fact that his experiences are particularly fantastic and are, in this sense, more akin to the wild and orgiastic ecstasy of the earlier prophets.<sup>1</sup> A number of factors militate against such an explanation. Firstly, the expression 'Yahweh's hand', which in Ezekiel seems to convey the same as the expression 'Yahweh's spirit', is linked not so much with uncontrolled speech and movement as with an overwhelming sense of being under Yahweh's compulsion (e.g. 3:14), and is also linked with receiving revelation in an ecstatic vision (e.g. 8:1).<sup>2</sup> Secondly, this idea of Yahweh's hand occurs in other canonical prophets. In Isaiah we read, 'For the Lord spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me' (8:11), and Jeremiah speaks of Yahweh's hand being upon him (15:17) and here, as Lindblom puts it, 'he is thinking of the permanent state of being under Yahweh's constraint rather than of occasional fits of ecstasy'.<sup>3</sup>

Because of this it is dangerous to set Ezekiel apart as a prophet whose prophetic experiences were essentially different from those of the other canonical prophets and to regard him as a throwback to the earlier ecstasies. There

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1. See Lindblom, op.cit., pp.178f.

2. For a parallel instance where Yahweh's hand produces an abnormal state in which revelation is received, see 2 Kgs.3:15-19.

3. Lindblom, op.cit., p.175. It may, of course, be objected that the sense of *יָד יְהוָה* is not identical in all these instances. The Isaiah and Jeremiah passages do not, for example, refer at all to 'ecstatic vision', and not explicitly to receiving revelation. The stress seems to be here on Yahweh's compulsion, as in Ezek.3:14. It may be, therefore, that Ezekiel's experience of receiving revelation is not shared by other canonical prophets. Nonetheless, the expression *יָד יְהוָה* which occurs in Ezek. to suggest Yahweh's constraint is paralleled in other prophets and, therefore, makes doubtful the idea that Ezekiel is altogether different.

is perhaps a difference of degree in that such 'abnormal' experiences seem to be more frequent and more intense in this prophet. But that is all that can be said. What, in fact, the ecstatic state of Ezekiel and the ecstatic state of the early prophets seem to have in common is the sense of being under an influence external to the self, of being possessed by a divine power. But as we have just seen, this is extended in Ezekiel to the consciousness of hearing words and seeing visions which are communicable. Now the strong sense of being under divine constraint and the consciousness of receiving a divine message are the dominant and constant features in the canonical prophets. Indeed, the two features often go together and it is in this 'possessed', 'inspired' or 'ecstatic' state that the prophet receives his revelation. Lindblom, in an effort to avoid the many implications and overtones of the term 'ecstasy', calls this state, 'the revelatory state of mind'.<sup>1</sup> He can then discuss this in terms of the canonical prophets in general, in the variety of their experiences. 'The revelatory experiences', he says, 'aroused feelings of different kinds'. The state could be, for example, one of joy (e.g. Jer.15:16), of excitement, agony, or fear (e.g., Isa.21:3; cf. Jer.4:19).<sup>2</sup>

It is important to notice that Lindblom regards these revelatory experiences as mostly emotional and imaginative, not intellectual. 'The prophets are overwhelmed by something that is stronger and mightier than themselves, and

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1. Lindblom, op.cit., pp.173-182, etc.

2. Ibid., p.179.

what they experience in the supernormal mental state fills them with extraordinary feelings, which they are unable to resist'.<sup>1</sup> So the revelatory state and its inspiration are to be clearly distinguished from the revelation itself, the word, which is rational, coherent, and addressed to the intellect and to the moral sense. Lindblom, therefore, rejects Mowinckel's view that what the spirit was in earlier prophecy, the 'word' became in classical prophecy;<sup>2</sup> and also Haldar's view that as applied to prophetic inspiration the two terms meant the same.<sup>3</sup> 'It is not correct to speak of identity', he says, but 'it is more pertinent to say that the spirit was the supernatural power that evoked the revelatory state of mind, while the "word" referred to the revelation itself...'.<sup>4</sup>

Whether or not Lindblom's conception of the distinction between word and spirit is correct, it is abundantly clear that in the canonical prophets it is the revelation itself, the rational and coherent message which they receive from Yahweh, that is of paramount importance, and the ecstatic

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1. Ibid., p.180. He adds that this emotional excitement could be reflected in bodily behaviour and in this sense they resembled the primitive prophets and could be described as madmen (e.g. Jer.29:26).
  2. Mowinckel, in JBL, 53, 1934, pp.199ff. Mowinckel's view, that special inspiration by the word rather than inspiration by the possession of the spirit is what distinguished the canonical prophet, is rejected by, for instance, Rowley, op.cit., p.117.
  3. Haldar, Associations of Cult Prophets among the Ancient Semites, pp.115ff.
  4. cf. Buber, The Prophetic Faith, p.64, 'In the one case one receives the stimulus, in the other the content'. Against this, however, it should be noted that in some of the major prophets we find 'the word...came to...', and not 'the spirit...came upon...', and that here 'the word' seems to do service for both the stimulus and the content of revelation.

state in its physical aspects, which may not always be present, is strictly ancillary; and herein lies the difference between early and canonical prophecy. Whilst the former is characterised by orgiastic ecstasy which is in some measure an end in itself, being regarded as the climax of religious experience, and moreover an experience attained by methodical exercises and deliberate training, the latter is characterised by perceiving and proclaiming the divine word, and ecstasy is only a means to this end. Further, ecstasy in the strict sense<sup>1</sup> is less common in the canonical prophets and we may do better to speak, in Lindblom's phrase, of 'elevated inspiration'. He writes, 'The typical visions were no doubt experienced in a state of ecstasy; but most of the prophetic revelations are not visions, but sermons and proclamations uttered in a state of mental exaltation'.<sup>2</sup>

This statement makes one particularly aware of the difficulty that runs through any discussion of ecstasy in Israelite prophecy, that is, that whether one regards the prophets as ecstatic or not depends to no small extent on how one defines the term 'ecstasy'. So far as the early prophets are concerned, there is no problem. 'Orgiastic ecstasy', as Lindblom calls it, receives its definition from the pictures of 'propheying' in narratives such as 1 Kgs. 18. As we have seen, abnormal experiences and behaviour which

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1. See below, pp. 43-47 for discussion of what constitutes the 'strict sense' of ecstasy.

2. Lindblom, op.cit., p. 217.



in some ways resemble this early ecstasy can be found in the canonical prophets, but these are uncommon enough to make us wonder about the relationship between these two phases of prophecy and doubt whether it is really appropriate to describe the canonical prophets as ecstasies.

On this problem of ecstasy, Engnell suggests that it is not true to say that prophetism gradually lost its ecstatic character and developed in the direction of spiritualisation and rationalisation; but that this is not to deny that there were differences in the degree and expression of ecstasy.<sup>1</sup> The validity of the first part of his statement depends, of course, on what is meant by spiritualisation and rationalisation,<sup>2</sup> but the second part reminds us that it must be kept in mind that 'ecstasy has many degrees'.<sup>3</sup> For there is, according to Lindblom, 'an ecstasy which involves a total extinction of the normal consciousness, a complete insensibility and anaesthesia. There is also an ecstasy which approximates to a normal fit of absence of mind or intense excitement'.

Lindblom's statement, however, represents his conclusions after a consideration of the meaning of the term 'ecstasy' and it is to a general consideration of ecstasy in relation to the canonical prophets that some attention must now be given. This is important, not simply for determining whether 'ecstatic' is a suitable term to apply to these prophets, but also because our view of the prophetic

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1. Engnell, *op.cit.*, p.151.

2. See below, p.46.

3. So Lindblom, *op.cit.*, p.5. He makes a fundamental distinction between orgiastic and lethargic ecstasy, e.g. p.48.



experience and its nature inevitably affects our view of the prophet's function.

There is firstly the definition of ecstasy as a state in which the soul leaves the body and goes off into distant regions. To this is sometimes added the idea of ecstasy as the culminating point of religious experience, whereby the soul realises perfect union with God.<sup>1</sup>

Many scholars make the point that the Greek word ἔκστασις is ill-fitted to express the phenomena of Hebrew psychology, since the Hebrew conceived of the self as an animated body and not as a psyche, which could escape from the body.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, this definition is found for the most part to be too narrow for any useful consideration of the relation between the canonical prophets and ecstasy. It has, therefore, been suggested by Lindblom, Heschel, and others, on the basis of modern psychology, that ecstasy be defined as 'an abnormal state of consciousness in which one is so intensely absorbed by one single idea or by a group of ideas or feelings, that the normal stream of psychological life is more or less arrested'.<sup>3</sup> Lindblom says that a clear distinction cannot be drawn between this state and 'inspiration', but nonetheless thinks that if there is a distinction it must be in terms of degree, i.e., ecstasy is inspiration intensified. He asserts that in the

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1. So the connotation of the Greek ἔκστασις - a state of trance, in which the soul is separated from the body and united with a deity.

2. e.g., Guillaume, op.cit., p.291, note 1. It would be wrong, however, to suggest that this viewpoint about the difference between Hebrew and Greek psychology is unanimously accepted.

3. Lindblom, op.cit., p.4.

prophets, inspiration has a tendency to pass over into real ecstasy.<sup>1</sup>

This suggests that we must be careful in using the term 'ecstasy' in connection with the canonical prophets and that it is a dangerous and misleading term to use if it is not defined. So some scholars would prefer not to use it at all or to confine the term to 'those states where there appears to be almost total loss of control on the part of the subject', where conscious thought and reflection are not involved.<sup>2</sup>

Now this raises one of the most important factors in determining whether or not the canonical prophets can reasonably be called 'ecstatics'. A powerful argument against regarding the canonical prophets as ecstatics is, it has been suggested, that ecstasy would seem to involve the extinction of the person, a loss of identity, whilst the prophetic personality, far from being dissolved, is intensely present and involved in what he perceives.<sup>3</sup> If, then, 'ecstasy' is confined to those states where there appears to be total loss of control on the part of the subject, it cannot be used of instances where the prophet's own conscious thought and reflection are involved.

Against this it can be argued that in their revelatory experiences the canonical prophets were in some sense taken out of themselves and spoke and acted in ways which were not normal to them;<sup>4</sup> and further, that these experiences

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1. Ibid., p.5.

2. So Micklem, op.cit., p.18.

3. So Heschel, The Prophets, p.357; and Lindblom, e.g., p.106.

4. See, e.g., Guillaume, op.cit., p.291, where, without giving specific examples, he speaks of stabbing the body, dancing etc.

involved not the loss and dissipation of consciousness but its heightening and quickening.<sup>1</sup> This understanding of the term 'ecstasy' leads neither to the extreme of believing it unthinkable that the prophets could owe their inspired moments to ecstasy (Heschel), nor to the extreme of believing them fully-fledged 'ecstatics' (T.H. Robinson). If ecstasy can be understood as exalted, imaginative perception or vision, which transcends the measure of normal consciousness, then surely ecstasy is the common experience of the canonical prophets.

This definition, however, seems to be so far removed from the meaning of ecstasy in relation to the early prophets and to be so psychologically 'modern' that we are still left with grave reservations about the applicability of the term and about any continuous development in the phenomenon of prophecy.

The truth is perhaps to be found midway between the two extremes. Whilst in the ecstasy of the early prophets the emphasis lies on the physical phenomena, such as dancing, and on the abnormal psychical effects, in the 'ecstasy' of the canonical prophets the emphasis is on the revelation which is received, and the peculiar psychic state which is involved, with any peculiar physical effects which may or may not accompany it, is accidental and relative. So, although there appear to be extensive similarities in the field of psychic phenomena between early and canonical

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1. See particularly, Knight, The Hebrew Prophetic Consciousness, pp.65f.

prophecy (which may possibly explain why the terminology of X'11 and its verbal forms are held in common), there are important differences. There are 'certain major common factors whereby the later prophetic movement can be seen as a coherent whole with an essentially homogeneous basic character distinguishing it from nabism, and justifying a synthetic treatment appropriate to its nature and structure'.<sup>1</sup>

It was stated at the beginning of this discussion of ecstasy that our view of the prophetic experience affects our view of the prophetic function and this is what is at stake here. For if, as in early prophecy, the emphasis is on the externals of the prophetic experience, the outward demonstration of the divine energy, then it is this experience, this ecstasy, which makes the prophet. Ecstasy is his aim and his qualification as a prophet. In canonical prophecy, on the other hand, the emphasis is on the revelation which the prophets receive in their ecstatic states.<sup>2</sup> Ecstasy does not make the prophet; it is not essential, nor is it a qualification; hence the difficulties in ascertaining who was a true prophet, as this could not be externally demonstrated. Whatever the element

1. Eichrodt, op.cit., p.341.

2. See Lindblom, op.cit., pp.310f., where he stresses that ecstasy was not the only nor even the fundamental source of the prophets' knowledge of Yahweh. Ecstasy 'was a peculiar mental state in which they received revelations of various kinds by visions or auditions'. It is an accessory and accidental phenomenon in the religious life of the prophets, whose knowledge of Yahweh was given them from history and tradition.

of the normal or abnormal, the rational or the irrational, in their experience (and this varies from prophet to prophet), it is as bearers of the word that they appear as prophets. By this time the very substance of prophecy is a word to be conveyed, a message to be imparted to others, and not an esoteric experience, manifested in fantastic behaviour. In canonical prophecy, the prophetic experience is the revelatory experience and the prophetic function is the function of receiving and delivering the divine revelation.

That it is the word, rather than the spirit, that is dominant in the activity of the canonical prophets is reflected in the other terminology describing their activity. Though a number of terms are involved, for instance, the verbs  $\gamma\lambda\tau$  and  $\eta\lambda\pi$  and the nouns  $\eta\lambda\pi$ ,  $\alpha\lambda\lambda$  and  $\alpha\psi\chi$ , the central feature in all these concepts is  $\gamma\lambda\tau$  and this must now be considered.

Though he may have underestimated the rôle of  $\eta\lambda\pi$  and ecstasy in the canonical prophets, Mowinckel was undoubtedly right in asserting that  $\gamma\lambda\tau$  is the basic reality for these prophets.<sup>1</sup> The general character of the prophetic literature is determined by the conviction that God has communicated his word (  $\gamma\lambda\tau$  ) to the prophets. This becomes apparent from the manner in which the prophets designate their messages, particularly from the formulas by which they introduce and conclude them.

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1. Mowinckel, in JBL, 53, 1934, p.211; cf. Lindblom, op.cit., p.55.



The most characteristic beginning is the oracle formula, **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה**, the so-called 'messenger formula'. This was commonly used by the early prophets as an introduction to their oracles and seems to have belonged to the oracular terminology of the ancient world.<sup>1</sup>

The most characteristic ending is **אָמַר יְהוָה**, utterance or oracle of Yahweh. This formula seems to have belonged originally to the old seer terminology. It occurs, for example in Num.24:3f. where Balaam utters what has been whispered ( **אָמַר** ) to him by Yahweh.<sup>2</sup> The absolute form of the word never occurs but the root would seem to mean to make a low noise, murmur, whisper, and the origin of the phrase may be in the revelatory experiences in which the prophetic character goes into some kind of trance and the voice that comes through the trance is this sort of sound. Whatever its origin, it is clearly a technical formula used to assert the prophet's authority as the bearer of Yahweh's word (see, e.g., Jer.23:31). Used in the same way is the term **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה**, an utterance, a proclamation of Yahweh (Jer.23:33; Zech.9:1; 12:1; Mal.1:1 etc.).

1. See Lindblom, op.cit., pp.103,109; and below where the significance of this formula for the prophetic 'office' will be explored, especially ch.IV. See also appendix. The objection may immediately be made, however, that the occurrence of such formulas is largely in material usually regarded as 'editorial' and may, therefore, tell us little about the prophets' own conception of their message and function.
2. So Lindblom, op.cit., p.94.

The reason why the terms  $\text{רָאָה}$  and  $\text{שָׁמַע}$  are used is probably that the prophets sometimes had ecstatic experiences in which they actually heard a divine voice speaking to them (e.g. 1 Sam.3:10f.).<sup>1</sup> It has already been noticed that it is sometimes said that the prophet 'saw' ( $\text{רָאָה}$ ) that which was revealed to him (e.g. Am.1:1). Thus 'hearing' and 'seeing' were both expressions for the reception of the divine word and the double mode of expression probably depends on the fact that visual and auditory elements were intimately combined in the revelation.<sup>2</sup> 'In the prophetic literature no definite dividing-line is drawn between visions, auditions, and inspired ideas in general. Everything which came to a prophet in the inspired state may be called "vision"'.<sup>3</sup> It should perhaps be remarked here that this confirms the earlier suspicions about attempts to differentiate between the  $\text{רָאָה}$  and the  $\text{שָׁמַע}$ .

The divine word is the compelling force in the prophetic ministry and experience. This is seen particularly in the call narratives (e.g. Isa.6:8; Ezek.3:1ff. and Jer.1:9), and above all in Jeremiah (e.g. 20:9; 23:29).  $\text{דְּבַר}$  is conceived of by the prophets as having an objective character. It is an active force, which has a self-fulfilling energy (see, e.g. Isa.54:10f.). This idea is, of course, not confined to the prophets (e.g. Gen.1:3; Ps.33:6), but it is characteristic of them. It is because the prophetic word, which is the divine word, is dynamic and brings into

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1. Ibid., p.55.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.108.

existence the content which the word expresses, that the prophets are both respected and feared. As Lindblom puts it, 'It is impossible to understand the role played by the prophets in Israelite society without realizing that the divine word pronounced by them in exhortation, warning and judgement was not only descriptive, but also effective and creative'.<sup>1</sup> The prophetic word had the power of the divine, to create (e.g. Ezek.37:4) or to destroy (e.g. Jer.5:14).

The chief mission of the canonical prophets was then to bear Yahweh's word, to communicate the rational and coherent message which Yahweh addressed to man. This is not to say that earlier prophets were not charged with this task. As we shall see in the next chapter when discussing the different 'types' of prophetic figures, this line cannot be drawn quite so sharply and there is, of course, the figure of Elijah to consider, in whose person features of both phases of prophecy appear to be combined.

Whilst some attempt has been made in this chapter to consider what the terminology of prophecy tells us about prophetic functions, there has to be a major admission of defeat. For, as stated at the beginning, the terms give us little clear information about these functions and are rather an obstacle to defining them with any clarity.

Nonetheless, with these facts in mind, the way is now open to consider other ways of approaching the varieties of prophetic activity.

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1. Ibid., p.114, and see further, ch.III, pp.215ff., passim, and ch.IV, pp.323,449, passim.



## CHAPTER II

### TYPES OF PROPHET IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

As we have seen, it is wrong to assume that the Israelite prophets constituted a homogeneous group. Not even the canonical prophets constituted such a group for, although it is possible to argue that there were certain common factors giving canonical prophecy a distinctive character,<sup>1</sup> we have found that prophetic experience differs between one canonical prophet and another and it is, therefore, conceivable that the prophetic message and function may also differ.

Nonetheless, certain 'types' of prophet appear in the OT, and certain terms, not derived from the OT, have been used to categorise them. As in the previous chapter, this categorisation is attempted according to activities and functions, but here again it is obvious that there are no easy divisions between types of prophets. The evidence of the biblical material, in which these groupings are not made, and the interrelationships which exist between prophetic functions, warn us against attaching too much importance to these divisions and indicate that they are to no small extent artificial.

These functions will be considered in detail in chapter III, and this present chapter, like chapter I, is chiefly an attempt to clear the ground for the major discussion of the functions of the canonical prophets, and,

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1. See above, ch.I, p. 47 ; and Eichrodt, op.cit., II, p.341.

in particular, of Amos and Jeremiah, by defining terms. These terms are those which frequently occur in the study of prophecy and even if the terms themselves or even the categories which they indicate are ultimately rejected, content needs to be given to them if their use is not to be thoroughly misleading or, at any rate, ambiguous. The main question behind this examination is, what does the evidence which is alleged to indicate these categories tell us about the office and functions of the prophet in ancient Israel?

The terms which are often used to denote types of prophet are 'ecstatic', 'institutional' or 'professional', 'cultic', and 'false'. It is at once obvious that these are largely artificial not only because they are not biblical and represent our later assessment of such prophets but also because they denote 'types' in different senses and in ways which overlap. Institutional prophets, for instance, may have been cultic prophets and any of the first three types may have been 'false' prophets, who, it should be said, represent a 'type' in a peculiar sense. The justification for including the term 'false' prophets in this consideration of types is that it is so commonly used in the discussion of prophecy, with the implication that such prophets had particular characteristics, however difficult it may be to define them.

All these 'types' have been contrasted with the canonical prophets and the strength or weakness of the reasons for this will be considered later. The main concern of this chapter, however, will be with early prophecy and



with the prophetic activities which we find there.<sup>1</sup> Some further thought will also be given to the development of prophecy, i.e., the relationship of early prophecy to canonical prophecy.

i) 'Ecstatic' prophets

The meaning of the term 'ecstatic' has already been explored and little more needs to be said here. It is most commonly used of the early prophets such as those in 1 Sam. 10:5,10 and refers to their abnormal psycho-physical state. Because these prophets appeared in communities, it could well be that ecstasy was a state normally experienced by groups (cf. Num. 11), though instances of individual experiences are mentioned (e.g. 2 Kgs. 3:15). Perhaps then it was characteristic of the  $\square'X'1111'11$ . Further, since these communities seem to have some connection with cultic sanctuaries (e.g. 1 Sam. 10:5), there could be a close relation between ecstatic prophets and the cult. It is not surprising, therefore, that the equation has been made between ecstatic and cultic prophets.<sup>2</sup> These, in turn, have been equated with institutional prophets and so already we encounter the difficulty of labelling prophets as if they fell into neat divisions.

The term 'ecstatic' should then, in the first instance, be used of prophets who experienced ecstasy, and it may be

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1. For clarification of what constitutes 'early' prophecy, see the discussion of this question below, pp. 91ff.
  2. Some suggest that this is the implication of the controversial passage in Am. 7:10-17; see below, pp. 529f.

that institutional or independent, true of 'false' prophets might have this experience. Whether or not the canonical prophets can be described as ecstasies largely depends, as we have seen, on how we understand the word 'ecstasy'.

Thus 'ecstasy' denotes primarily a kind of prophetic experience and in itself is of little help in defining the prophetic 'office' or function. The situation is quite different, however, so far as the second 'type' is concerned, and this will now be considered.

## ii) 'Institutional' prophets

It is interesting that in his Theology of the OT, Eichrodt makes a clear differentiation between the 'official' leaders in Israel and the 'charismatic' leaders. In the first category he places priest and king and in the second he places prophets, irrespective of 'type' and period.<sup>1</sup> If the matter were really so simple, however, there would hardly be cause for discussing the term 'institutional' in relation to the prophets, for all prophets would be independent, which is surely the antithesis of institutional. The fact is that to call all the early prophets independent is not entirely accurate as they appear to be related to the court and the cult and so to be, in some degree, 'dependent' on the institution of monarchy. Moreover, it is this relationship of the early prophets to the court and the king's sanctuaries which has led recent scholars to speculate

1. Eichrodt, op.cit., II, e.g., p.391; cf. Noth, 'Office and Vocation in the OT', The Laws in the Pentateuch and other Essays, pp. 229-249; see further elaboration and discussion of this point in ch.III, pp.167ff.

about the relationship of the canonical prophets to the cult and, in some cases, to speak of a prophetic office within the cult.<sup>1</sup>

It should be emphasised that not all talk about the prophetic 'office' involves the notion of an official, cultic position. For the term 'office' can be defined very widely as a specific task of function attached to a particular position or commission. So von Rad understands the word and thus for him the 'office' of Elisha, for example, and the task to which he was called as a prophet are identical.<sup>2</sup> When 'office' is used in this way, it is obvious that every prophet in the OT has an office. Whether it be great or small, important or unimportant, recognised or unrecognised, each prophet will have an office - at least one.

There is, however, another way of understanding the term and it is here that 'official' and 'institutional' become virtually synonymous. According to this understanding, 'office' is not conceived of as any task, not even as a task attached to a particular position or post, but more precisely as the task expected and required of a person who has been given a position by king, state, or public body. If this definition be followed, then it is far less obvious that the early prophet in ancient Israel has an office, and the question of whether or not he has becomes important. The question then is, is there evidence

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1. The most extensive analysis of such a prophetic office is in the research of Reventlow, Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos; Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia; Wächter über Israel, Ezechiel und seine Tradition.

2. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p. 27.

in the OT for prophets who were undeniably official? If such prophets are to be found, the primary place will naturally be the court, and the main areas to be explored will be the relation of the prophet to the king, and the relation of the prophet to the priest.

It is said that the first reliable information we have about Israelite prophecy is in the period of the early monarchy.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, it is here that we encounter the first outstanding figure in Samuel.

In considering the presentation of Samuel as a prophet and the question of institution or office, it is vital to take account of the fact that there are two main traditions to be found in 1 Sam. In the first, as found, for instance, in 8;10:17-27a; 12, we have a picture of Samuel as a national figure, ruler of the people, the last of those judges who were raised up by God to save his people. In the other tradition, e.g. 9:1-27; 10:1-16; 11:1-11,15; 13, Samuel is represented not as a judge, but as seer, a prophet consulted by men about their problems, such as finding lost asses (9:5ff.), and involved in the anointing and counselling of Saul as king.

In the discussion of the sources relating to the establishment of the monarchy (1 Sam.8-12), it is usually argued that the earlier source, which is favourable to the monarchy, represents Samuel as a seer of merely local standing, whereas the later source presents him as a nationally recognised, theocratic judge. Thus Samuel's rôle

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1. By, e.g., Kuhl, op.cit., p.41. The earlier references to prophets in Num. and Jgs. are unhistorical, in that they are Deuteronomic additions.

as seer probably belongs to an earlier stage of the tradition than his rôle as judge.<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted, however, that in ch.3 Samuel is presented not as seer nor as judge but as א'ל and it is said that 'all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord' (v.20). This problem has been solved by regarding 1 Sam.1-3 as part of an independent source, viz., a biography of Samuel.<sup>2</sup>

This confusion, if that is in fact what it is, serves to show at least two things: that there is a variety of religious view in different parts of the first book of Samuel, the narratives being of varying provenance and historical value and reflecting different interests, and that Samuel is presented to us in differing rôles; those of judge in the sense of a deliverer (e.g., 1 Sam.7:3-14), a priestly judge in the forensic and administrative sense of the guardian and interpreter of the sacred law of Israel (e.g. 1 Sam.7:15-17), a prophet (1 Sam.1-4:1a), and a man of God and a seer (1 Sam.9:1-10:16).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, in the opening

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1. See, e.g. Kennedy, Samuel, p.18; H.P. Smith, The Books of Samuel, p.xvi. See also Welch, Kings and Prophets of Israel, pp.64f., where he says that the later tradition is more likely to be historical.
  2. So Kennedy, op.cit., p.18, where he adds that it is probable that 15:1-16:13 originally formed part of this biography; and H.P. Smith, op.cit., p.xviii, where he considers a separate document about the life of Samuel to exist comprising 1;3;4;7:3-17;8;10:17-25;12:15. Also the existence of a special tradition about him is evidenced by the mention of the 'book of Samuel the seer' (1 Chr. 29:29).
  3. Hertzberg, op.cit., pp.130f., comments that the earlier thesis that the Saul stories, which he regards as 1 Sam. 7-15, could be divided into two or three sources, detectable by literary criticism, has been increasingly discarded. (For such analysis of sources, see Kennedy, op.cit.,  
(Contd.)



chapters, he seems also to be presented as a priest.<sup>1</sup>

These opening chapters are obviously of importance in considering Samuel as priest and as prophet, though, not surprisingly, differing views of these chapters yield differing conclusions. Hertzberg, for example, points out that the writer is at pains to stress Samuel's initial position in the sanctuary - '...the boy ministered to the Lord, in the presence of Eli the priest' (2:11b, cf.v.18). It is not until he receives a special calling (ch.3) that Samuel becomes a prophet. 'In this way', writes Hertzberg, 'he unites the priestly office with the prophetic vocation'.<sup>2</sup>

Some, indeed, go much further than this and suggest that the story seems to be saying that the prophet in Israel, as personified by Samuel, succeeded and took over the functions formerly exercised by the house of Eli - 'Thus 1 Sam.3 might be termed an aetiological legend which seeks to explain the emergence of the prophet in Israel'.<sup>3</sup> Against

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Contd.) pp.13-23; Smith, op.cit., pp.xvi-xxii, though their number and divisions of sources are not identical.) He offers his own understanding of the presentation of Samuel as judge in 1 Sam.7-15 (pp.130-134). Weiser also rejects the older interpretation of these chapters about the founding of the monarchy, Samuel. Seine Geschichtliche Aufgabe und religiöse Bedeutung. The details of this need not be given here, but it may be noted that he thinks that in ch.7 we see Samuel acting as judge after the loss of the Ark and the destruction of Shiloh, and also fulfilling a priestly and a prophetic function, sacrificing at Mizpah and interceding for the people (pp.5-24). cf. Hertzberg, op.cit., p.43, where he suggests that in Samuel the three offices of prophet, priest, and king are united, and see further, ch.III, pp.176, etc.

1. cf. below, p.71.

2. Hertzberg, op.cit., p.43.

3. Newman, 'The Prophetic Call of Samuel', Israel's Prophetic Heritage, p.87.

this view it should be stated that, although from various indications (e.g. 1 Sam.3:21; 7:5-6) it has been deduced that Samuel was primarily a priest, he is nowhere explicitly called a ןו, as is Eli (1 Sam.2:11b), and that Samuel is not introduced as the founder of prophecy, as if it were an entirely novel phenomenon in the history of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

Even in the sphere of prophecy, Samuel seems to have had a multifarious part to play. As already mentioned, in chapter 8 we see Samuel as a judge. In the view of the text, which, together with 10:17-24; 12:1-25, represents a critical attitude to the monarchy, it was Samuel who played the decisive part in the formation of the monarchy. But it is not only in his capacity as judge that Samuel is involved in monarchical affairs. The terms used of Samuel in 9 and 10:1-16 are ד'אלהים ש'א (v.6), and נאן (v.11), terms which are equivalent to נאן or at least proper to a particular type of prophet, and in ch.10 we see Samuel anointing Saul as king.

Now anointing is a sacramental act by which a man, destined for a special office, like that of priest and particularly that of king, is demonstrably consecrated by God. Hertzberg says that the sacred character of the anointing derives from the person who does it. In the last resort, in fact, it derives from Yahweh himself. Here then Samuel acts as the representative and instrument of Yahweh. Moreover, he stresses that it is really Yahweh who does the anointing (10:1; cf.15:1).

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1. So Kuhl, op.cit., p.43.

Clearly then Samuel has no prophetic office from Saul. He is a prophet before he encounters Saul and, more than that, is Yahweh's representative in anointing him. As a prophet, Samuel is under Yahweh's constant command (e.g. ch. 16) and does not receive his orders from Saul now king. As Buber puts it, the prophets in anointing the kings of Israel (e.g. 2 Sam.12; 1 Kgs.14:7) have no appointment, but only a mission.<sup>1</sup> Whilst Samuel's power as judge would automatically be diminished by Saul's being king, his function as a prophet remains unchanged. He is obviously deeply involved in the affairs of the king, but nowhere is it suggested that this is by the king's appointment.

Samuel the prophet also appears (19:20) as the head of a prophetic community (  $\text{D}'\text{X}'\text{I} \text{ } \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$  ) such as we first meet in 10:5-7. As we saw in chapter I, these prophets are sometimes to be found at a sanctuary (  $\text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$  ) and, inspired by music, are sent into a prophetic ecstasy. In 1 Sam.10 we are told that Saul is seized by this ecstasy so that people ask,  $\text{D}'\text{X}'\text{I} \text{ } \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ } \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ } \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$  (v.11). There has been considerable discussion about the meaning of this saying and some of this needs to be looked at here since it concerns the relation of both Samuel and Saul to these ecstatic groups.

The Rabbinical expositors saw in the saying an expression of surprise that the son of so lowly a man as Kish should be

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1. Buber, op.cit., p.68.

found in such distinguished company, but, in view of the eccentric behaviour associated with these prophets, the reverse is far more likely.<sup>1</sup>

Now it has been objected that this traditional interpretation of the saying, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?' (1 Sam.10:11,12; 19:24) as an expression of amazement, even disapproval, that Saul should be associated with groups of ecstatic prophets does not represent the original meaning of the saying. It is argued that the OT interpretation of the proverb is anachronistic, as the 'degenerate' sort of ecstatic prophecy depicted in 1 Sam.10 and 19 first appears in the time of Elijah and Elisha, and that the narratives about Saul and the prophets are aetiological legends.<sup>2</sup>

It is possible, however, to recognise the narratives, to which the saying is attached, as fictitious anecdotes, intended to explain the origin and motive of the saying, i.e., as belonging to the category of aetiological legend, without inferring that ecstatic prophecy did not exist in Saul's time and that there is, therefore, no historical link between Saul and such prophecy. This is maintained by Lindblom, who takes issue with those who totally deny

1. So H.P. Smith, op.cit., p.71, who mentions that Samuel seems to be a well-to-do man. In support of Smith's interpretation is also the expression in 1 Sam.10:12, וְהָיָה כִּי יִרְאֶה אֶת הַנְּבִיאִים which does not suggest that the prophets were distinguished company. See most commentators on this phrase, e.g., Kennedy, op.cit., p.86; Hertzberg, op.cit., p.86.
2. So Eppstein, op.cit., who suggests that the question originally meant 'Is Saul a king of David's type or is he a charismatic judge-priest like Samuel?'; cf. Sturdy, 'The original Meaning of "Is Saul also among the Prophets?"', VT, 20, 1970, pp.206-216, who translates, 'Saul indeed is not among the prophets', this, Sturdy believes, being the negative estimate of the person of Saul in the propaganda of David's supporters.

the historicity of the passages, suggesting that this type of prophecy came later and represented a degeneration of a higher, nobler type. These narratives are not, he admits, historical in the strict sense. He is suspicious, for instance, about the historicity of the picture of Samuel as leader of the ecstatic community (1 Sam.19:18ff), for the phrase  $\text{וְלִי עֲלֵי יָדָי} \text{ (v.20)}$  corresponds to the phrase in the Elisha stories (2 Kgs.4:35 & 6:1).<sup>1</sup> Yet, he believes, these narratives are historical in the sense that they are typical presentations of primitive prophecy, with its characteristic contagious ecstasy.<sup>2</sup>

Lindblom believes that it is impossible to establish the beginnings of ecstatic prophecy in Elijah's time. Indeed, he thinks it is impossible to date such a beginning at all, since ecstatic prophecy is a feature of the ancient world, not limited to a particular race and people and since prophecy as a whole is such a variegated and complex phenomenon. We recognise, for example, prophets of woe, court prophets, fortune-tellers, prophets for whom ecstasy was important as the medium of revelation, and prophets for whom ecstasy lay in the background, and it is not possible to establish a precise development. Rather there is a broad spectrum of prophetic types existing at the same time.

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1. See also Weiser, op.cit., who thinks that we are given an idealised picture of Samuel.
  2. Lindblom, in ASTI, 9, 1973, pp.35f. He is here replying to Eppstein's criticism of his interpretation of 1 Sam. 10;19 in PAI, pp.47,74, by clarifying what he means by saying that these are 'reliable records' and what he means by 'historical'. It may be remarked that the two narratives (1 Sam.10:1ff.; and 19:18ff.) need not have the same degree or kind of historicity.



Nor is it possible, he says, to regard ecstatic prophecy as a degenerate form of primitive prophecy. It is far more likely that the higher prophecy was a sublimation of the 'primitive' prophecy, implying something new, yet having certain points in common with it. It is not that these primitive prophets first appeared in the ninth century in Elijah and Elisha but that at this time of crisis they came forward, although they had always been there.<sup>1</sup>

Further, in Lindblom's view, there is a historical link between Saul and the ecstatic. For, he argues, we must take seriously the popular saying, later surrounded by legend, as belonging to a definite historical situation, linked with Saul, the king. We must ask about points in the person and life of Saul which could have given rise to this.<sup>2</sup> He finds examples of Saul's association with Samuel and ecstatic prophecy in the references to Saul's receiving revelations through ephod-oracle and the prophetic guidance of Samuel (e.g. 1 Sam.14:3; 15:28). He thinks, therefore, that the popular saying does, in fact, express amazement, even disapproval that Saul the king and Yahweh's anointed should have sought oracles from the ecstatic, prophetic communities in the land in order to gain divine revelation.<sup>3</sup>

From this it emerges that there are a number of

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1. Lindblom, in ASTI, pp.36f. In support of Lindblom against Eppstein is the fact that there is far more evidence of ecstatic prophecy before the time of Elijah and Elisha than during it, when there is, in fact, no explicit mention of ecstasy.
  2. Ibid., pp.34,38.
  3. Ibid., p.39. It is, of course, possible to accept Lindblom's judgement on the historicity of the narratives in 1 Sam.10;19, without accepting his view of the meaning of the לשון.

hindrances to obtaining a clear picture of Samuel's position, the chief one arising from the presence of different sources and traditions in the books of Samuel. It would be very difficult, indeed, to argue that Samuel had a clearly defined prophetic 'office'. Even his functions are not clearly defined. Pedersen's judgement here, although vague, is perhaps the final word - 'There was, at any rate in the old time, no fixed limit to the spheres in which a man of God might exercise his activities...'.<sup>1</sup>

In 2 Sam.7:2, we have the first mention of Nathan, one of the most eminent men in the reigns of David and Solomon, who takes the place of Samuel as the counsellor of the king. He seems to have had a permanent relationship to the king and to have belonged to his staff. He is regularly called a נָבִיא<sup>2</sup> and his position in David's entourage suggests that he was a public functionary and a court prophet. In 1 Kgs.1:8,10, he is mentioned together with Zadok, the priest, and Benaiah, one of the commanders-in-chief and men of the body-guard. However, it could be argued that since the court lists neither of David (2 Sam.8:15-18 = 1 Chr. 18:14-17, and 2 Sam.20:20:23-26) nor of Solomon (1 Kgs.4:1-6) mention Nathan, he does not appear to have been a court functionary as later, in the reign of Solomon, his sons were (1 Kgs.4:5). However, he is perhaps the nearest we get to a prophet with an office.

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1. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, p.120.

2. cf. above, ch.I, pp.11f. Again the difficulties of dating and editing arise. For it may be argued that Nathan was an official, and only later styled נָבִיא by the Deuteronomist. On the question of Deuteronomistic editing, see, e.g., McKane, I and 2 Samuel, pp.28f.

The question then arises as to what this office comprised. Being a prophet at David's court, Nathan played a part in matters connected with the cult at the palace. In 2 Sam.7, it is expressly said that he acted as David's counsellor when the king was planning to build a temple for the Yahwistic cult in Jerusalem. It is interesting here that he first approved the plan but after a special revelation felt himself obliged to reject it. There is in v.4 a clear distinction between Nathan's own judgement and the divine message ( *וַיִּחַדְתִּי אֵלָי* ) which he was commissioned to deliver to David.

Many critics regard this and 12:1-15, the other section in which Nathan appears, as an addition to the original narrative, a prophetic comment on the history. Certainly, chapter 7 stands apart from the main narrative both in its literary nature and in its strong theological interest. In 12:1-15, we find Nathan as the trusted adviser to the king and it is to be observed that he suffers no consequences for his fearless rebuke. Nathan's rebuke of David over Uriah the Hittite reminds us of Elijah's rebuke of Ahab for his murder of Naboth (1 Kgs.21), and in this chapter we see Nathan as the fearless upholder of traditional religion and morals. Kuhl writes, 'This belongs to the great line of prophecy that leads directly from Samuel, Nathan and Elijah to the great literary prophets'.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, as will

1. Kuhl, op.cit., p.47. It should be remarked that to include Samuel, Nathan, and Elijah in this so-called 'line of prophecy' begs a number of questions and ignores certain differences which may be important. Here, for instance, whilst Nathan's rebuke of David is reminiscent of Elijah's rebuke of Ahab, Elijah, unlike Nathan, was not a court functionary and did not have such an office. See below, pp.69ff.

be discussed later, it has been suggested that it was in their rebuke of the king and insistence that moral sanctions were applicable even to him that the prophets' function lay.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be noted that Nathan was involved in the anointing of Solomon, in conjunction with Zadok the priest (1 Kgs.1:34) and in the political intrigues through which he ensured Solomon's elevation to the throne in the face of all the other claimants (1 Kgs.1:11-31).

Gad is the other prophet who appears to have been a court prophet, in that he had a more permanent relation to the king and seems to have belonged to his ordinary staff, though the tradition about him is so scanty and its presentation so lifeless and impersonal that his historicity has been seriously doubted.

According to tradition, Gad was already in attendance on David when he was an outlaw and gave good advice in critical situations (1 Sam.22:5). Later he was David's prophetic counsellor during his reign, as we are told in 1 Sam.21:5. The building of the altar to Yahweh on the top of the hill of Zion came about as a consequence of an oracle communicated by Gad in his capacity as David's court prophet and, like Nathan, Gad also gave the king moral guidance (2 Sam.24:11ff.). It should be observed that the prophet was not the only source of political guidance available to the king in Israel. 1 Sam.24:5 shows Gad giving the revealed word of the prophet, but 2 Sam.16:23

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1. Buber, op.cit., pp.60-95.

shows Ahithophel giving the guidance which is the fruit of empirical sagacity. Thus the court prophet was not unique in having an influential rôle as an adviser and policy-maker.

Gad is expressly called 'David's seer' (  $\text{גִּדְיָהוּ}$  ) in 1 Chr.2:19 (2 Chr.19:25). He is also called  $\text{נָבִי}$  (1 Sam.22:5) and in 2 Sam.14:11 we meet the complete title, 'Gad, the prophet, David's seer'. Lindblom says, 'It seems as if "seer"...in this connection was a title belonging to a public functionary at the royal court. That this functionary was also called "nabi" means that David had taken his "seer" from the circle of nabis of this time'.<sup>1</sup> This, of course takes us back to one of the major obstacles to estimating the status and function of these prophetic types, viz., terminology. We have already noted Eppstein's suggestion that 'Nathan is given the title nabi', as of an official like Samuel though of lesser authority, while Gad is merely designated 'the king's hozae, a personal attendant gifted with clairvoyance'.<sup>2</sup> We have also noted his criticism of Lindblom's view of the nature of prophecy in Samuel's time. He further criticises Lindblom with regard to Nathan, and, by implication, Gad. For, he says, the authority of the  $\text{נָבִי}$  was much diminished by the time of Nathan and Gad. 'In Saul's reign prophet and king clashed in head-on collision, but under David already Nathan and Gad are mere councillors and, as it were, court chaplains'. He continues, 'Although Lindblom endeavours to represent

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1. Lindblom, PAI, p.76.

2. See above, ch.I, pp.11f. It is worth noting, however, that Eppstein fails to comment on the references to Gad as  $\text{נָבִי}$  in 1 Sam.22:5; 2 Sam.14:11.



Nathan as a public functionary of some authority, it is clear enough even from his account that the title nabi' was already less than a shadow of Samuel's in prestige and authority'.<sup>1</sup> This rests, of course, on Eppstein's contention that there was a decline, a degeneration in prophecy and that the 'degenerate', ecstatic prophecy that had come to exist by Elijah's time, did not exist in Samuel's day. Since, as we found, this argument is weak at a number of points, Lindblom's estimate of the status and function of Nathan and Gad will be accepted here, though the inevitable lack of clarity arising from differences of terminology should not be dismissed lightly.

The ninth century brings the next important prophetic figure, Elijah. As in the case of Samuel, different sorts of material have to be recognised here. There is in the books of Kings a selective treatment of the materials for the history. In his commentary on Kings, Gray says that the Deuteronomist incorporates a substantial amount of the Elijah saga out of respect to the prophet as a representative of the ancient Israelite tradition over against the fertility cult. Whether this is a true description of Elijah's function remains to be seen. It should be made plain, however, that no attempt will be made here to give a comprehensive estimate of Elijah's prophetic function and status. As in the brief discussion of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, the concern is rather to pick out some of the salient features regarding the 'type(s)' of prophecy represented

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1. Eppstein, op.cit., p.299.

by these figures, in preparation for the subsequent consideration of canonical prophecy.<sup>1</sup>

In chapter 17, Elijah appears as a man of God (אִישׁ אֵלֹהִים), in whom the life-force is so strong that he could breathe some of its abundant energy into the dead child and bring him back to life. Far more important for giving us some idea of the prophet's activities is the rest of the cycle, in particular chapters 18 & 21. In ch.21, Elijah is the defender of the old social order and the traditional moral standards. It can thus be said that Elijah is concerned with affairs of state, in social and political crises. But this is not to say that he was in any way official. In fact, he seems to be a clear example of a free-lance.

In 2 Kgs.2 Elijah goes on a farewell visit to the prophetic guilds at Jericho and Bethel. As in Sam., these guilds are associated with the shrines. Now this raises two issues. Firstly, can a hard and fast division be made between a free prophet and a prophet associated with the guilds? For Elijah seems to have been independent and yet related to other prophets. Secondly, there is the question of the relation of the prophets to the cult and linked with this the relation of the cult to the state.<sup>2</sup> If the guilds are to be found at the shrines, what are they doing there?

Lindblom asserts that there can now be no doubt that there were intimate connections between the early prophets

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1. For a detailed consideration of Elijah's prophetic ministry, its historicity and significance, see, e.g., Peake, 'Elijah and Jezebel: The Conflict with the Tyrian Baal', The Servant of Yahweh and other Lectures, pp.112-149.

2. See below, pp.103f.

and the cult.<sup>1</sup> The bands of prophets whom Saul met had just come down from the הבית, the place of worship (1 Sam.10:5). As already mentioned, in 1 Sam.1-4:1a, Samuel is described as priest and prophet in one person.<sup>2</sup> He was educated in the sanctuary of Shiloh and was ministering in the service of Yahweh before Eli (1 Sam.3:1). But at the same time Samuel is explicitly called a prophet of Yahweh, since Yahweh revealed himself to him at Shiloh (3:20f.). Whether or not the account which the sources give of Samuel is historical, the combination of priest and prophet in one person was felt by the narrators to be quite normal and appropriate. Here again, in the cycle of Elijah stories and also in the Elisha cycle, we see this association. We find the prophetic bands living in places well-known as ancient cultic centres: Samaria, Bethel, Gilgal, Jericho, and Ramah, but it remains an open question whether they held a cultic office there. It is also not clear that the prophetic communities lived at or were connected with the actual cultic centres. From several passages in the old narratives, we gain the impression that the prophets were not always bound to the sanctuaries and the cult, but lived their own lives apart from the sacred places (e.g. 1 Kgs.2;14; 2 Kgs.4). The evidence about Elisha is ambiguous. The story of the Shunammite woman in 2 Kgs.4, for instance, suggests that there were specific times and specific payments

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1. Lindblom, PAI, p.79; cf. von Rad, OT Theology, II, pp.50-53.

2. As we have seen he is not explicitly called הנביא but his priestly rôle is implied; cf. 1 Sam.9, where again he is not called הנביא but הזקן, but where he is seen offering sacrifice, generally accepted to be a priestly function.

connected with consulting the prophet, and Lindblom goes so far as to say, 'On festival days the prophets were to be found at the sanctuaries performing their cultic duties'.<sup>1</sup> However, he adds, if the early prophets in Israel 'belonged to the cultic staff' at different sanctuaries, this would have implied that they had their maintenance from the sanctuary where they worked and we have no evidence that this was always the case.

Before considering Elijah on Carmel, it is perhaps necessary here to summarise and appraise some of the arguments over the relation of the early prophets to the cult, particularly those of A.R. Johnson.<sup>2</sup> Johnson argues that the prophets, both in general and particularly as regards the Jerusalem Temple, originally filled a cultic rôle of at least equal importance to that of the priest. The principal function of the cultic officials, he urges, was the giving of oracular direction, both  $\text{ד'טפן}$ , which he describes as 'rules' governing civil and criminal cases, and  $\text{ד'נפן}$ , which he describes as 'direction' in matters of ceremonial observance. The latter, especially, he argues, came to be the mark of the priestly office and '...within his own sphere he [the priest] was originally as much a medium of revelation as the prophet'.<sup>3</sup>

Johnson draws evidence from the books of Samuel for asserting that the prophet was also a cultic specialist,

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1. Lindblom, PAI, p.80.

2. Johnson, CPAI.

3. Ibid., pp.7f. This will be discussed more fully in ch.III.

alongside the priest. The narrative of 1 Sam.9:1-10:16, he says, makes clear that the seer could be consulted for the sake of this unusual and divinely bestowed power and 'in view of the fact that Samuel had charge of the sacrifice at the local "high place", it is obvious that the seer was a cultic figure of some importance with a special responsibility for the formal worship of Yahweh.'<sup>1</sup> He goes on to give further examples of when prophets were summoned for the purpose of securing divine guidance and these include the story in 2 Kgs.3:6ff., where Elisha is consulted concerning a grave shortage of water. He finds it only natural that a prophet like Elisha is found in close connection with the cultus and the sanctuary. It should be noted that here and elsewhere, prophets are found in close connection with the army and with war.<sup>2</sup>

He then urges us to see the story of Elijah on Carmel (1 Kgs.18) in the light of all this. For Johnson, this story clinches his argument so far, for in it he sees a 'true picture of a typical X'11', staging a sacrificial scene at one of the many sanctuaries where Yahweh's altar has been reduced to ruin. He regards Baal's prophets and

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1. Ibid., p.15; cf. p.9. As we have seen, Samuel's offering sacrifice in 1 Sam.9 need not indicate that he was doing this in his capacity as seer and moreover, that this is more likely to be a priestly function and thus, what the passage suggests is not that Samuel, the seer, was a cultic specialist, but that Samuel was a seer, in addition to being 'a cultic specialist', in the sense of performing priestly functions. e/

2. Whether one considers that this weakens or reinforces Johnson's argument depends on how one conceives the prophet's task in relation to war. On 'Holy War', see below, ch.IV ia, pp.343f.



Yahweh's prophets who there confront each other as the representative specialists of the two cults. It is surely doubtful, however, whether Elijah's contest on Carmel is irrefutable proof of his being a cultic specialist. It is true that the mention of repairing the altar (v.30) is important but does its importance not lie simply in the fact that Elijah was standing for the exclusivism of Yahwism?<sup>1</sup> So von Rad, following Alt, understands it and says that the altar to Yahweh had been erected after the time of David and represented an encroachment of Yahwistic worship on alien territory, but that later the old indigenous cult revived and this led to the co-existence or coalescence of two forms of worship.<sup>2</sup> It is not surprising that Elijah found this intolerable and the whole point of the narrative would seem to be that the two were irreconcilable and a choice must be made. This interpretation gives no justification for deducing that Elijah was a cultic official and, as H.H. Rowley reminds us, the cultic prophet is no more than a theory - 'Since prophets were religious persons, devotees of their God, it is natural to find them in the shrines in which religion centred. But that does not make them members of the staff of the shrines'.<sup>3</sup>

It is to be made clear, however, that Johnson is not alone in all the stages of his argument. Many would concur

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1. For a convincing exposition of Elijah's rôle as the champion of Yahwism against the cult of the Tyrian Baal, see Peake, *op.cit.*, pp.112-122.

2. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.17.

3. Rowley, *op.cit.*, p.111.

with his view that the tasks of prophet and priest in procuring counsel and guidance overlapped. Pedersen, for example, says that the close connection between the prophets and priests in their original task implied that they could not always be definitely separated, though he attempts a division, when he says of their involvement in the cult, 'The prophet acted through personal inspiration, the priest by busying himself with the sacred objects and sacred tradition'.<sup>1</sup>

Halдар, in Associations of Cult Prophets among the Ancient Semites, goes even further, by describing the priests and the prophets as two kinds of priests and also makes a rather tenuous division between those who work by technical methods of oracle and those who work by ecstatic inspiration. Pedersen concludes, 'On the whole the position of the prophets and the part played by them in the older Israel is rather clear. They have a task similar to that of the priest, namely to work for holiness and to be of use to the people by discerning what is hidden under the surface, and they are, at any rate, in many cases, attached to the sanctuary just like the priest'.<sup>2</sup> That the partial truth of this is largely accepted is demonstrated by the fact that the problem of the relation of the prophets to the sanctuaries and the cult which was performed at them is

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1. Pedersen, 'The Rôle played by inspired persons among the Israelites and the Arabs', in Studies in OT Prophecy, pp.130ff. For discussion of this view and other views of the relation between priestly and prophetic functions and methods of inspiration, see further, ch.III, pp. 158ff., 183ff.; also see appendix.

2. Ibid., p.131.

far less fiercely debated than in the realm of canonical prophecy.

Certainly from the records we have about Elijah, we emerge with no clear picture of his relation to the cult and, far from having an office, he seems to have a similarly wide function to that of Samuel and to be a much less 'official' person. It is obviously very difficult to form a critical estimate of Elijah from the popular folklore which the historical writer selected to answer his purpose. One feature remains to be mentioned, however, and this is Elijah's rôle in political events. In 19:15, in particular, he is commissioned to instigate the coup d'état of Hazael in Syria and of Jehu in Israel.

This aspect of the prophet's function is followed up in the life of his successor, Elisha, and he it is who, in fact, sees these coups through (2 Kgs.8:7-15; 9:1-6). Elisha is also closely connected with the  $\text{ד'אליהו}$ . Moreover, in 2 Kgs.4:38; 6:1ff., they are under his charge. It has been suggested by von Rad that these assemblies of the prophetic guilds were for teaching purposes and that these prophets may have been the representatives of a pure, uncontaminated Yahwism and its divine law, living in social and economic detachment. If this be so, Elisha, their leader, can certainly not be said to have lived in similar detachment or, at least, not totally, for, like earlier and later prophets, he was obviously concerned in the state policies of the day. Indeed, this would seem to have been the most important aspect of his work, once we recognise that the stress upon miracle is probably due to a one-sided

picture of his work, i.e., the aspect remembered by popular tradition. He is regarded as the direct instrument of the God who guides history, and, as 2 Kgs.13:14 indicates, he is looked upon as Israel's true defence.

We have noted above Buber's suggestion that if the pre-canonical prophets had a common function then it may have lain in the task of rebuking the king. Whether this was so and how far it can be said to have constituted an office must now be considered.

There would seem to be two things that can fairly surely be said of the relation of the prophet to the king. Firstly, a relation did exist and the prophet cannot be viewed in isolation from the monarchy. Pedersen, in keeping with the reaction against seeing the prophets as originators, writes, 'If we want to realise their importance in history, we have to look for their position in the social order of their age. The prophet was an indispensable figure in this order'.<sup>1</sup> As we have seen, not only the people, nor even primarily the people, came for the prophet's guidance, but also the king. Visionaries and ecstasies of the prophetic type have always been exploited by kings, chieftains and other political rulers to secure their interests, and there are many indications that the early prophet of Israel was no exception. As already seen, the prophet intervened in politics and stood ready to give counsel to the king. When entering upon important undertakings, the king constantly applied to the prophets for a word from God. David had Gad and Nathan; Rehoboam, Shemaiah (1 Kgs.12:22);

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1. Ibid., p.128.

Jeroboam, Ahijah (11:29ff.); Jeroboam II, Jonah and so forth. Especially before and during a war had the king need of prophets. 'Therefore', says Pedersen, 'he had a whole order of prophets attached to his court', for example, the prophets whom Ahab summoned (1 Kgs.22). These Pedersen regards as corresponding to the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah who had their meals at Jezebel's table (1 Kgs.18:19).<sup>1</sup> But there is a second thing to be said of this relation to the king. The prophet is the helper and servant of the king, not by virtue of the king's or society's appointment but by virtue of Yahweh's commission, of 'a power that gives him an importance of his own, and since it is rooted in the divine power itself it endows him with an authority, which is by no means always minded to subordinate itself to that of the king, but may even claim to be greater than it'.<sup>2</sup>

There is then a mixture of independence and subordination characterising the prophets' relation to the king. Often, therefore, they became active members of the factions that grew up around the monarch. The prophet Nathan was one of the principal men among those who worked for the succession of Solomon at the court of David (1 Kgs.1:8,10, 11,22ff.) and the prophets are constantly intervening for or against political plans. Thus the prophet was at the service of the king and yet still a man of inspiration and accordingly of an authority which he could exert over the king.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, pp.125f.

2. Ibid., pp.128f.

3. For ancient Near Eastern parallels, especially at Mari, see appendix.



The kings paid the greatest respect to the prophets, not because the prophets were official but because they saw in them men who could influence profoundly both them and their peoples. The deep deference accorded to the man of God is reflected in 2 Kgs.8:12f., where Hazael calls Elisha 'my lord' and himself his 'servant' and in 1 Kgs.18:7, where Obadiah who was a high official at Ahab's court, says, 'Is it you my lord Elijah?' (cf. 2 Kgs.12:14; 8:13).

Because of his independence and authority, the prophet may often be charged with a severe word (e.g. 1 Kgs.14:6); hence, he is not always cordially received (1 Kgs.17:18; 1 Sam.16:4). The words he gives are Yahweh's words. Therefore he has power to prescribe a course of conduct (1 Sam. 15:3). Pedersen contends that the prophet's function of censuring the kings has been exaggerated in the Books of Kings, so that we are given the impression that every king had his prophet to chasten and humiliate him. Nevertheless, he admits that behind this 'lies the historical reality of which the whole of prophetic literature gives evidence, viz., that a series of prophets very forcibly asserted their authority against the king, being conscious that Yahweh spoke through them'.<sup>1</sup>

Martin Buber convincingly propounds the view that this was a major prophetic task from the days of Samuel.<sup>2</sup> He argues that the prophet's criticism of the king is based on the fact that this kingship in the hour of its foundation is bound up with God's will and declared to be responsible

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1. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, p.130.

2. Buber, op.cit., pp.60-95.

to him. He quotes Weiser's comment that the king is considered 'as the executor of the divine will and Samuel as the prophet and guardian of it'. He points out that the prophets anointed all the kings of Israel except Omri (though this is questionable). This task he regards as the appointment of those prophets of Israel who mainly had no appointment in state and society, but only a mission. For 400 years, he says, comes one prophet after the other and takes his stand before the king and reproves him.

Already at its inception, he urges, the kingdom attempts to grasp the power to dispose of the sacred sphere of public life, as is shown in the story of Saul's rejection. 'It is particularly unwilling that war should be dependent upon the prophetic revelations of God's will; war is solely an affair of the king, and Yahweh has no part in it except through the priestly institution (1 Sam.14:3,18); the king offers himself the common sacrifice in Samuel's place (13:8; 14:35) and refuses to let his decisions be influenced by the sacred ban (15:9).'<sup>1</sup> Finally, Buber says that 'the early kingdom strives to neutralize the prophets by giving them an official status in the form of a court office'. But it never succeeds in making them wholly subservient and a Nathan and a Micaiah have their courage and independence in common and the basis of this was Yahweh's word.

Against Buber, however, it should be noted that there is evidence that the prophetic task seems to have lain not in

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1. With this view, however, should be contrasted that of von Rad and subsequent writers on the Holy War. See, for instance, von Rad, OT Theology, II, pp.159f.; Bach, Die Aufforderungen zum Flucht und zum Kampf im alttestamentlichen Prophetenspruch.

rebuking the king but rather in securing וְלִשְׁמֹרֶת.

Whilst some would argue that this was the task of the 'cultic' prophets or of the 'false' prophets,<sup>1</sup> the fact remains that rebuking the king seems to be more exceptional and not a recognised prophetic function (cf. Balaam in Num.22-24). Buber gives Ahijah the Shilonite as an illustration of his view, but whilst it is true that Ahijah does rebuke Jeroboam (1 Kgs.11:29ff.), there is no indication that it is his function as a prophet. It may also be remarked that there may have existed a difference between the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms. Most examples of prophets rebuking kings come from the North, where prophecy seems to have been a fairly radical reforming movement. There are few instances of prophets rebuking kings in the South.

As already stated, early prophecy is a disparate phenomenon. The picture of the life of the early prophets in the old narratives is incontestably not homogeneous and there are different types and classes of them. All that can be said, therefore, with regard to their 'office' is that some of them, e.g., Gad and Nathan, were attached to the royal court and may have been maintained as part of the royal household. Samuel presents a less clear picture. Kraus, in Worship in Israel, thinks that there may have been a particular office of Bundesmittler, functioning at the central sanctuary during the early history of Israel, and that this, Samuel could have held.<sup>2</sup> In all probability,

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1. See below, pp.104ff., 124f., et passim.

2. On this office, see below, ch.III iic.

however, Samuel held no official position but rather, combining in his person the functions of seer, priest, prophet and judge, was in his time a religious and political leader of the greatest importance, working in virtue of his personal authority. This raises a question which needs consideration in the later prophets, of whether or not professionalism and officiality are to be equated. Elisha too received gifts for his work and was associated with the prophetic guilds at the sanctuaries, but it is very doubtful whether he had an official position. An allied question concerns the relation between cultic and official prophecy. Again, are they to be equated? Could a prophet have an office without being professional and without being cultic? As suggested at the outset, it is perhaps more sensible, at least in the early period, to retain the term 'cultic' for those who had an officially accredited position in the cult alongside the priests, as Nathan appears to have had (1 Kgs. 1:34). It seems probable that even as early as the beginning of the period of the monarchy, a sort of 'professional' prophecy emerged, the representatives of which considered themselves to be bound to the interests of the state and the king (1 Chr.25:5; 2 Chr.35:15).

One of the most striking facts to emerge from a study of the early prophets is that there were varieties of prophet in Israel, not only in their spiritual level, but in their means of functioning. This makes it extremely difficult if not impossible to speak of a prophetic 'office' in the sense of an official position with clearly defined functions, and leaves one with the impression that the most

vague assessments of the prophetic functions at this time are probably the most accurate. E. Robertson, for instance, writes, 'We can only say that the prophet was a sacred person who could exercise his prophetic ministry in a shrine or elsewhere'.<sup>1</sup> He continues, '...as God's will and interest ranged widely over all the activities of his people, the task of the prophet was not confined to one particular channel'. He concludes, 'There is no a priori reason why the servants whom Yahweh selected for a divine possession should all be assigned the same common task. It would not be easy, for example, to put Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Amos and Deutero-Isaiah in the one category of spiritualisers of the Law, without some ingenious dialectic and much juggling'.<sup>2</sup>

That this softening of the lines is a great gain is argued by H.H. Rowley, who emphasises the importance of avoiding oversimplification.<sup>3</sup> In dealing with OT religion, he says, no simple dichotomies are justified. Recent study has emphasised the variety of prophets in Israel. The seer could be attached to a shrine (e.g. 1 Sam.9:6ff.; 1 Kgs.14:1f.), to the court (e.g. 2 Sam.24:11) or be consulted in his house about private matters (e.g. 2 Kgs.5:9). The prophet was found by the way (e.g. 1 Kgs.17:17ff.), and in company (e.g. 1 Sam.10:5,10). There were groups of nebiim attached to the court (e.g. 1 Kgs.22:6) and to the Temple (Jer.23:11; 26:7f.). Sometimes oracles were supplied to order and

1. E. Robertson, 'The Rôle of the Early Hebrew Prophet', BJRL, 42, 1959/60, p.418.

2. Ibid., p.420.

3. Rowley, 'Ritual and the Hebrew Prophets', From Moses to Qumran, pp.126-138.



sometimes the initiative lay with the prophets.<sup>1</sup> On the subject of the cult he warns that we must beware of out-running the evidence. He states that the association of prophets with cultic centres is important, but that they are not necessarily connected with particular shrines, like the priests.<sup>2</sup>

Whilst 'cultic' prophets as a type will be considered separately later, we have already seen that separation of prophets into distinct categories is impossible. This is especially so in the case of 'institutional' prophets, for it is the connection of the early prophets with the institution of the cult, closely associated with the court, that has led people to apply to them the term 'cultic' prophets.

Now this is particularly apparent in Engnell's treatment of the subject. He holds that there have been two main ways of understanding the multifarious concept of 'prophet': institutionally and inspirationally. The former stresses the more 'official' side of the prophets' activities and regards them as professional cultic servants with specific tasks; and here, he says, the distinctions between the prophetic and the priestly offices become very blurred. The latter places emphasis on the psychological characteristics of prophetism. These two aspects of prophetism must not be played off against each other as mutually exclusive alternatives; but recent research, he

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1. Rowley, in The Servant of the Lord, pp. 108f. The division in the use of the terms 'seer' and 'prophet' here is Rowley's. He does not make plain why he regards Elisha as a 'seer' rather than a 'prophet' in 2 Kgs.5:8ff. The terms, in fact, applied to him there are 'man of God' and 'prophet'.

2. Ibid., pp.109-113.

says, referring in particular to Johnson and Haldar, 'has been characterised by a strong emphasis on the institutional aspect. The result is that the terms prophet and priest have come to be understood as more or less equivalent, which conflicts sharply with the earlier idea that they were diametrically opposed to each other. Rejecting the division between institutional 'seers' and 'ecstatic, free prophets', Engnell writes, '...both seer and prophet were professional men who were "organised", i.e., who lived together in guilds under the leadership of a...master; it is clear that they were predominantly associated with the cult and thus were connected to or active in the different sanctuaries, including the central royal sanctuary. And because of the close proximity of the royal palace and the temple, it is possible to speak of "court prophets"'.<sup>1</sup>

Engnell himself, however, shows here a tendency to generalise about early prophecy. His definition of 'organised' prophets as prophets who lived in communities, predominantly associated with the cult, and thus with the court, ignores the fact that Elijah, Elisha, and even Samuel seem to have functioned independently of prophetic groups and not exclusively in cultic centres.

It is necessary at this point to consider more closely what is meant by 'professional' when this is used to denote a type of prophet. The title of 'professional' prophet is, many claim, precisely what Amos is rejecting in his reply to Amaziah (Am.7:14); and, although this passage, because of its ambiguity, is not much help in determining with any

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1. Engnell, op.cit., pp.123ff.

certainty the meaning of the terms applied to prophetic persons or what constituted the differences between prophetic 'types', it compels us to consider what exactly is meant by 'professional'. For those who, assuming the present tense, interpret Amos's words as a disclaimer of the titles  $\text{X}'\text{ll}$  and  $\text{X}'\text{ll}'\text{ll}$ , are required to explain what they understand by a 'professional' prophet. There is no uniformity in this, but there are a few distinct possibilities.

One of these assumes the existence of 'cult prophets'. It assumes that there were cult prophets at Bethel and that it was from these that Amaziah derived his conception of the  $\text{X}'\text{ll}$ . This is maintained by Lindblom, who believes that Amos, in rejecting this title, is claiming that he is not a member of an ordinary association of cult prophets, who could be treated as a cult functionary and thus forbidden to preach in one sanctuary and instructed to go to another to earn a livelihood. Amos says that he professionally raised cattle and sheep. Not being a professional, cultic prophet, he cannot take orders from the priest. Amos is, Lindblom argues, rejecting this understanding of the term  $\text{X}'\text{ll}$  in favour of another, meaning a free, unattached prophet. He writes, '...the narrative of the conflict...presents Amos as a prophet, but as a prophet who did not firmly belong to an ordinary cultic association'.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Lindblom uses 'professional' in the sense of a

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1. Lindblom, PAI, pp.184f.

cultic official, under the control of the priest at the sanctuary and earning his livelihood in this way. Some scholars, however, have attached to it a more derogatory sense and related it to the 'false' prophets of the OT. Included amongst these scholars are Sellin, Lods, Morgenstern, and Hammershaimb.

Morgenstern thinks that the  $\text{X}^{\prime}\text{ll}$  and  $\text{X}^{\prime}\text{ll}^{\sim}\text{ll}$  denote the 'reactionary prophet', active in stirring up conspiracy.<sup>1</sup> He argues that professional prophets, beginning with Ahijah of Shiloh, had rebellion as their established policy. They were instrumental in installing kings, and in ousting them if they disappointed prophetic expectations, as did, for instance, Jeroboam I and Baasha. Ultimately, he says, they turned against Ahab and were effectively crushed. Almost all that remained of these reactionary, 'back to the desert', prophets in Elijah's time were prophets who were merely passive tools of the king, as evidenced by 1 Kgs.22:6-28. Elisha, he claims, represented a temporary revival of professional prophetism, a revival of 'the old, crude policy of dethronement and massacres of the ruling dynasty and the elevation to the throne of one more amenable to prophetic leadership'. Elijah, on the other hand, was the forerunner of a new type of non-professional, individual prophecy.<sup>2</sup> By the reign of Jeroboam II, professional prophecy had become thoroughly

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1. Morgenstern, Amos Studies, I-III, pp.30ff.; cf. Mays, op.cit., p.135, and Snaith, The Book of Amos, Part 2, pp.125f.; and see further, ch.V, p.526.

2. Morgenstern, op.cit., pp.21-30. He fails to comment on the relationship between Elijah and Elisha, and between Elijah and the 'guilds' as it is shown in 2 Kgs.2.

degenerate. Its representatives were men of no authority and low repute, who functioned only at beck and call and for what it might profit them. They were, in fact, 'false prophets'. It is, he argues, against this evolution of prophecy that Am.7:10-17 can be understood. Amaziah looked upon Amos as merely a professional prophet, seeking to revive the policy of conspiracy against the king and effect a change of dynasty. He was to Amaziah just one of the degenerate prophets whose prophecy was a source of livelihood. By contrast, Amos asserts that he is not a  
 X`]] He is something altogether new in the history of prophecy.<sup>1</sup>

Whether or not Morgenstern's final point, viz., that Amos represents something new in the history of prophecy, is accepted, it must be said that his view of the 'evolution' of prophecy is somewhat eccentric. We have seen that prophetic figures, particularly in the North, were involved in political affairs, but the idea that those prophets who were merely passive tools of the king were the very successors of these 'rebellious' prophets is illogical. Further, whilst Elisha and Elijah are, indeed, different from each other, it is odd that Elijah should be regarded as the forerunner of a new type of prophecy, whilst his successor should be regarded as representing a temporary revival of professional prophetism. Certainly, however, Elijah, as we have seen, does seem to represent a non-professional, individual prophecy; and the notion that there were professional prophets who prophesied to suit the

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1. See further, pp. 89-94.



king receives considerable support from the OT material.<sup>1</sup>

Hammershaimb, for his part, follows Lindblom in holding that Amos is denying that he is a professional prophet, in the sense of being cultic. Most of the  $\square'X'11$ , he says, would be cult prophets connected with the sanctuaries.<sup>2</sup>

Related to this is the question of whether 'professional' includes the connotation mercenary. For if the  $X'11$  is a professional who proclaims peace to earn a living,<sup>3</sup> surely this suggests that he is mercenary. Some, indeed, have interpreted Amos's reply as a repudiation of the suggestion that he should consult self-interest, that he should return to Judah where he will be paid for prophesying. Amos is then asserting that it is not for money that he prophesies, but because of divine constraint.<sup>4</sup>

Behind the opinion of those who contend that Amos is either rejecting the title  $X'11$  or using it in an altogether new sense is the belief that Amos represents something unprecedented in prophecy. It was mentioned earlier that the four main 'types' of prophet under consideration in

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1. See below, on 'false' prophets, pp.116f.

2. Hammershaimb, The Book of Amos, pp.52,117.

3. The official function of proclaiming  $\square'17U$  is what many regard as the characteristic of the so-called 'false' prophets. See below, pp.104ff.

4. It should be noted that even if such a repudiation of self-interest is understood in Am.7:14f., this does not necessarily show that  $X'11$  meant such a self-interested prophet, nor that all professional prophets were self-interested. Rowley, for instance, sees this repudiation here and yet disagrees with the view that Amos is denying that he is a  $X'11$ . He, therefore, does not equate mercenary and professional. He, in fact, accepts the existence of professional prophets in the sense that they earn money and are to that extent official without making a connection between them and self-interested or 'false' prophets, 'Was Amos a Nabi?', Eissfeldt Festschrift, 1947, p.198; cf. ch.V, pp. 528f.

this chapter have all been contrasted with the canonical prophets. Again it is Am.7:10-17 which brings this subject to the fore. The question can be formulated in two ways; did something new enter the institution of prophecy with Amos or did prophecy cease to be institutional? Which, if either, is the correct way of approaching the subject depends on the nature of Amos's newness. It has been suggested that this newness lay in Amos's announcing the judgement of the whole people of God. The point is not that judgement from the prophets was new (e.g. 2 Sam.12:10f.; 24:13; 1 Kgs.14:1-13), but that never before had it meant the funeral of the whole people. Before it had been the end of a régime, or punishment of an individual or a small part of Israel, for a limited time.<sup>1</sup> The corollary of this is that Amos was not exercising a different function, but was different in the degree to which he exercised it.

Now Amos's total judgement, it is true, must not be under-emphasised. The book shows just how strange this idea was to the people of Israel (e.g. 5:18-20). Nevertheless, a more searching question is, not whether it is woe to a part or to the whole of the Covenant people, but why it is woe at all? In other words, why should Amos be a prophet of woe to Israel, and is he here essentially different from the so-called 'institutional' prophets, sometimes equated with prophets of weal or with 'cultic' prophets?

There is a feeling after this sort of division in the work of a number of scholars. Martin Buber, for instance,

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1. e.g. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, pp.39f.; and Lindblom, PAI, pp.217f.

emphasises the actual historical situation in which a man prophesied.<sup>1</sup> Yahweh, he says, 'does not deliver into the prophet's hand a completed book of fate with all future events written in it, calling upon him to open it in the presence of his hearers. It was something of this kind the "false prophets" pretended.... Their main falsity lay not in the fact that they prophesy salvation but that what they prophesy is not dependent on question and alternative'. 'The true prophet does not announce an immutable decree. He speaks into the power of decision lying in the moment, and in such a way that his message of disaster just touches this power'.

It would seem that if there is any distinction to be pressed between 'types' of prophets here, then it is this. It is not a clearcut distinction between prophets of weal and prophets of woe, but a distinction between prophets who are open to the future in the sense just defined by Buber and who speak weal only in relation to obedience, and prophets who are not open to the future, who speak weal because it is required of them by their official position. If this is true, then it seems quite probable that Amos is a new type of prophet in that he is the first really to work out this relation of obedience and judgement. He is not the prophet of doom, as distinct from other prophets of weal, but he is a living, mediating man.

The idea that Amos is the first prophet to take seriously the threat of total judgement upon Israel is very much present in the thought of Eichrodt. He believes the classical

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1. Buber, op.cit., pp.103f.; cf. Mays, op.cit., p.83, and see below, pp.113ff.

prophets to be separated from the nebiim (who, he thinks, continued to exist alongside the classical prophetic movement<sup>1</sup>) by 'the menacing irruption of a divine reality unperceived by their contemporaries'.<sup>2</sup> 'The prophetic life', he says, 'was lived, and the thought of the prophets developed, under the impact of a new reality which menaced both their own personal life and that of the nation'.<sup>3</sup>

This new understanding of the will of Yahweh and a sense of his immediacy are what he regards as representing a new

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1. Eichrodt, op.cit., II, pp.338f. Throughout this section on the 'newness' of canonical prophecy, we shall run into the difficulty of defining terms, and some clarification must first be given. As stated in the Preface, these are used in different ways by different scholars. Here, for instance, Eichrodt uses the term 'Classical' prophets to mean the canonical prophets, i.e., Amos to Malachi. Similarly, Lindblom (PAI, pp.47,105,218) equates the term 'classical' with 'canonical', as referring to prophecy from the eighth century till the time when prophetic inspiration died out in Israel, or, at all events, left no considerable record of tradition. He regards the two characteristic features of these prophets as i) their preaching was concentrated on the ideas of the rejection and the eventual re-establishment of Israel and ii) their messages made such a strong impression on their contemporaries that they were carefully preserved in tradition and sooner or later written down. It should also be noted that Lindblom, unlike Eichrodt, prefers to speak of 'primitive prophecy' rather than nebiism, since prophets of later epochs are also called nebiim (p.47). As we saw in the discussion of ecstasy in ch.I, Lindblom considers there to be differences between the prophets of the time of Samuel, and Elijah and Elisha, and between Elijah and Elisha and the classical prophets. The use of the term 'classical' in this sense, however, begs important questions, some of which enter into the present discussion itself. For instance, were there transitional figures, and if so who were they: Samuel, Nathan and Gad, Elijah (cf. Engnell, op.cit., pp.130f.)? As stated in the preface, our major concern is with the canonical prophets, who though they cannot be said to constitute a homogeneous group, are at least clearly defined. The term 'canonical' will, therefore, be used in this discussion, unless quoting or referring to other scholars, when their usage will be made clear.

2. Eichrodt, op.cit., II, p.344.

3. Ibid., p.345.



phase in the history of prophecy. The classical prophets, he says, were not proclaiming hitherto unknown ideas about God, though their knowledge of God was, he thinks, carried further than in the past. Rather, they took God, well understood to be that same God whose special relationship with Israel they had never contested, really seriously.<sup>1</sup> Eichrodt works out this contention in various spheres, for instance, in 'the prophetic critique of daily life'. There it is not that the prophets proclaim a different morality from that of ancient Israel, but '...the significance of the prophets for the ethical ideas of Israel is to be sought rather in the fact that they bring the impact of the divine reality directly to bear on the sphere of moral conduct'.<sup>2</sup>

Another suggestion that has been made in favour of the view that Amos is claiming to be a new sort of prophet is that he is a universalist rather than a nationalist. Morgenstern, for example, claims that, though it is vague and incomplete, there is a concept of universalism in Amos which contrasts with the narrow nationalism of the 'false' prophets. Amos's reply in 7:14 is thus a 'repudiation and rejection of the traditional message of professional prophecy, the message of a nationalistic Yahweh and assured national triumph, and national supremacy over all Israel's enemies'.<sup>3</sup>

A similar, though not identical, point emerges from Würthwein's study. He does not think that there is a straight division between prophets of weal and woe, between

1. Ibid., pp.352f.

2. Ibid., pp.361f.

3. For further discussion of this, see below, ch.IV ia on Amos 1:3-2:16.



nationalists and universalists, but he does think that Amos, through his individual experience of God and his personal commission, brings out the ambivalence of the Yahwistic religion, i.e., that Heilsgeschichte is dependent on Yahweh's claim and Israel's obedience. He thinks that Amos is new in that he is not bound to the office of the nabi, which consists of proclaiming weal for Israel, but has, through personal experience, expanded and radically altered this office, by his conviction that Yahweh wants him to proclaim woe.<sup>1</sup>

None of these views of Amos's newness, however, settles decisively the original question about whether Amos, as the first of the canonical prophets, represents something new in institutional prophecy, with Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha as his forerunners, or whether he marks the end of institutional prophecy, with little or no relation to an earlier phase. It should be stated, however, that the idea of independent, non-institutional activity characterises these views, and this indicates the difficulty that exists in attempts to show that Amos had an official position.

Even if it were conceded, however, that Amos lacked an 'office', in some way established by or dependent on the institutions of the monarchy and the cult, we are still left with the fundamental question of the relationship of early prophecy to canonical prophecy, for, as we have seen, there is very little evidence of early prophets who were 'official' in the sense of being wholly subservient to the

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1. Würthwein, 'Amos-Studien', ZAW, 62/63, 1945/51, p.34.

king. Before leaving this section on 'institutional' prophets, therefore, some further attention will be given to the fundamental issue of the evolution of Israelite prophecy.

The straight line of development which was once drawn from the ecstatic bands met with in 1 Sam.10:5ff & 19, down through Samuel and Elijah to Isaiah and Jeremiah has for long now been recognised as an inadmissible oversimplification, and the relation of the canonical prophets to the primitive prophets has been hotly debated. The question has been asked, is there any real historical connection between the two groups of prophets or did the (canonical) prophets form a totally new phenomenon in the religion of Israel?<sup>1</sup>

Engnell's view, mentioned earlier, in which he argues that it is a mistake to differentiate between institutional and non-institutional prophecy, should here be elaborated.<sup>2</sup> He mentions the old evolutionistic theory, whereby there were thought to be two offshoots from the oldest surviving branch of prophetism and that one offshoot was gradually transformed and evolved into a higher, spiritualised form, represented by later 'Yahwistic', 'doom' or 'reaction' prophetism. He refers to Lindblom's Profetismen i Israel, where, he says, a distinction is made between 'cult prophecy in the sanctuaries' and a 'free, vulgar prophetism'. Engnell thinks that if this distinction is possible, which he doubts, it existed from the first and did not gradually

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1. Lindblom, PAI, p.216.

2. Engnell, op.cit., pp.130-137.

emerge. He writes, 'all pre-Yahwistic or "reaction" prophetism continued to be connected with the cult to a much higher degree than was formerly thought...'. He argues that prophetism is too complex to be divided neatly into cultic and anti-cultic categories. Throughout Israel's religious history, at least to the time just preceding the Exile, prophets were connected with the sanctuaries. We are not justified, he claims, in assuming that because these were 'professional' prophets they could not experience 'calls' or appear with oracular messages on their own initiative (e.g. 2 Sam.7:1ff; 1 Kgs.11:29ff.). It is significant here that Engnell equates prophetic guilds and 'professional' prophets and that he assumes that these are the prophets mentioned as a group within society in Jer.6:13; 8:10; 14:18; 18:18.

He then speaks of royal or court prophets, who seem to have held a somewhat different status, though he admits that the 'distinctions between them and the guilds are very obscure'. They are connected with royal sanctuaries in a more 'stationary' way. They are intermediaries of the divine word and proclaimers of the divine response. 'Naturally', he writes, 'most of the time their pronouncements were positive and included promises of victory, prosperity and blessing'. We know of such royal prophets from the early period of the monarchy under Saul down through the centuries (2 Sam.7:1ff; 24:11; 2 Kgs.3:11ff.) (The distinctions between the court prophets and the prophetic guilds must surely be 'very obscure' if Engnell cites here 2 Kgs. 3:11f. concerning Elisha and 2 Sam.7:1ff. which he

also cites as evidence of a 'professional' prophet appearing on his own initiative).

On the question of the relation of primitive prophetism to 'reaction' prophetism, Engnell says that we cannot assume that a branch of the 'lower' prophetism was 'Yahwicised', spiritualised or ethicised until it attained the 'higher' monotheistic form represented by 'reaction' prophetism. Nor can we use transitional figures in this process, as they themselves were too varied to be forced into this sort of developmental pattern. He asks then, 'Did Yahwistic prophetism arise suddenly and unexpectedly with Amos? Was Amos a different kind of prophet from the others of his day, one of an entirely new type, perhaps with an antagonistic attitude towards the nabis with whom he and his hearers were familiar?'.

Engnell's answer to this is clear, if not altogether convincing. - 'The differentiation and division within prophetism did not "originate" at all....It was there from the very beginning, conditioned by personal qualities and actualised in specific situations.... Individual rebels appeared spontaneously in both Yahwistic and non-Yahwistic circles, at both non-Yahwistic or syncretistic sanctuaries, and cult centres and at the royal court'. He suggests that there were perhaps different circles of prophets and their disciples, not a chronological development along one line. He attacks, in particular, what he calls the 'Wilderness line', characteristic of all the literary-critical exegetes dependent on Wellhausen, whereby the Yahwistic prophets are regarded as advocates of the ideal Bedouin ethic of the Days

of the Fathers - 'They purified the popular Israelite religion, which resulted from the influence of the Canaanite paganism on the Israelites when they settled in the land'. He rejects this not only because of its romantic view of the desert, but because it assumes that Yahwistic prophecy is characteristically anti-cultic. The idea that the prophets propagated a spiritual religion which was independent of the cult is, he says, completely foreign to ancient Israel, including her prophets.

Engnell's contention that 'individual rebels' arose at different times and from different circles is difficult to refute and is supported by the feeling amongst many scholars that it is virtually impossible to date the origin of a particular type of prophecy.<sup>1</sup> His use of the term 'rebels', however, indicates that he does regard these prophets as in some way different or new and suggests that they had a degree of independence from the institutions of court and cult.<sup>2</sup> Further, Engnell's explanation of the rising up of rebels periodically is, in reality, only pressing the questions or the origin and nature of prophecy further back, for the questions remain, in exactly what way were they rebels and why did they arise?

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1. cf. above, pp.63f. and Eichrodt, *op.cit.*, II, p.338, where he says that it is 'doubtful whether we can fix forward and backward limits for the phase in which the prophetic movement reached its climax, as if this phase were an entity in itself which could be understood in isolation from the laws that governed its organic growth'.

2. cf. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.52, where he says that the canonical prophets were distinct from the 'temple-nabis' being 'members of a radical wing which increasingly declared its independence from the operation of the official cult'.



Engnell's reluctance to make hard and fast divisions between early and canonical prophecy<sup>1</sup> is also shared by many scholars. Lindblom, for example, thinks that it is a serious mistake to dissolve the connection between the two, as both are called 'prophets' and their activity called 'prophesying'. By using the title אֲלִיף for the later as well as the earlier prophets, he says, the biblical writers show that the two groups had 'something essential in common'.<sup>2</sup> In fact, he continues, they had many common characteristics. For example, they had inspired revelations, sometimes in the form of visions and auditions, and ecstasy of various degrees.<sup>3</sup> Other common characteristics included symbolic actions, oracles and the use of the typical oracle formulas, the sense of divine constraint, the consciousness of having been called and sent by Yahweh and of having admission to Yahweh's council and being bearers of the divine word. Lindblom also mentions the social and political significance of the prophets in Israelite society, which made them objects of both honour and contempt, their intimate connection with the cult and the sanctuaries, their zeal for Yahweh, the national God, and the cause of their

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1. Engnell's term is 'Yahwistic prophetism' (op.cit., p.130), but his inclusion of the term 'literary prophetism' in his list of the terms commonly applied to this kind of prophecy makes clear that he is thinking of canonical prophecy.

2. See ch.I, pp.31ff. for discussion of this and cf. Eichrodt, op.cit., II, p.339. It could be pointed out that all that the use of the title shows of itself is the belief of the biblical writers that the two groups had 'something essential in common'. Lindblom's point stands, however, but on the ground of their common characteristics rather than on the application of the common term, though see ch.I, p.31.

3. See ch.I, pp.40ff. and Eichrodt, op.cit., II, pp.340ff.

own people.<sup>1</sup>

However, the fact remains that there are also significant differences between early and later prophets. As we have seen, ecstasy in the canonical prophets was less common and other extraordinary gifts such as clairvoyance, wonder-working, and magical actions were practically alien to them.<sup>2</sup> The stress is rather on the spoken word (and also, to some extent, on the symbolic action, especially in Ezek.). Eichrodt takes this further than many will allow, arguing that 'the work of the prophets had shifted decisively into the sphere of spiritual and personal understanding' and that consequently it had no strong organisational backing. This prophecy needed, therefore, a spiritual power and inner conviction and this it was that gave the classical prophet complete independence and raised him above the masses.<sup>3</sup>

This raises many questions which demand considerable attention, such as the relation of canonical prophecy to tradition, but the main point at issue here is whether a distinction can be pressed between early and canonical prophets in terms of their being 'institutional' or non-institutional. We have seen that the early prophets were themselves not a homogeneous phenomenon and Engnell is surely right to be wary of regarding prophets like Elijah

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1. Lindblom, PAI, pp.105f., 216.

2. Ibid., pp.216f., and Eichrodt, op.cit., II, p.342. This is based on an argument from silence and we must take account of Ezekiel as either the outstanding exception or an indication that the canonical prophets did, in fact, have such experiences and gifts. On this, see above, ch. I, pp.38-40.

3. Eichrodt, op.cit., II, p.342.

and Elisha as transitional figures, when clear differences exist even between them. Nonetheless, we have found that these early prophets belong to or were associated with prophetic communities and had connections with the court and the cult, and were to this extent 'institutional'. With regard to the canonical prophets, however, there is no mention of their living in prophetic guilds, though Isa. 8:16ff. suggests that they sometimes gathered a circle of disciples around themselves which could be much the same thing depending on what constituted the function and the purpose of the 'guilds' and the 'circles of disciples', respectively. Some of these prophets had close relations with the court and the kings, but one never hears of court prophets in the strict sense among them, such as those at the court of David.<sup>1</sup>

Buber and also Skinner see the development as one from prophecy as an institution, with a recognised position and function, to prophecy as an individual mission, which owed nothing to the public recognition of its office. Buber says that the Israelite נָבִי was in former days a leader. It was as a נָבִי that the first liberator lived in the memory of the people and there would again and again appear a prophetic leader (Dt.18:18). He writes, 'After the kingdom had been firmly established, the nabi was pushed from

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1. Many claim that Isaiah was a member of court circles. The only evidence for this is his ease of access to the kings:- Ahaz (Isa.7:3ff.), Hezekiah (37:21f.; 38:1-8; 39:5-8); and his relationship with state officials (8:2; 22:15-25). This evidence amounts to very little and the inference that he was a member of court circles is not at all necessary.

his place if he was not willing to be a paid court minister of spiritual affairs, and instead he became a powerless opposition to the powerful; instead of leading, he had to expound what true leadership is and what it is not'. God's truth became opposed to all that the court and princes wished to hear.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever one's view of the nature of canonical prophecy and of its relation to prophecy at an earlier stage, the dominant impression given by this prophecy is of independent, non-institutional activity. In this it differs from earlier prophecy in which institutional links are far more apparent. It is clear, however, that this need not constitute a clean break, for we have seen that there is a measure of independence in the activity of early prophets and that only Nathan and Gad can be described as 'institutional' prophets in the strict sense of belonging to and being employed by the institution of the monarchy. Attention must now be directed to the closely related term as applied to prophetic persons, viz., 'cultic'.

### iii) 'Cultic' prophets

There are three main reasons for the use of the term 'cultic' prophet. Firstly, there is the argument that there are ascribed to prophetic persons in the OT functions which properly belong to the cult, that is, functions which have a cultic setting, e.g. intercession. (Some scholars, of course, have taken this much further and concluded that there are

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1. Buber, op.cit., p.230.

prophets who had a cultic 'office'.<sup>1)</sup> The chief source of evidence for this is the Psalter, but there are also references in 1 & 2 Chronicles and in Jeremiah which have led people to assume the existence of 'cultic' prophets and, in some cases, to argue that they were not necessarily of a different 'type' from the canonical prophets. A detailed discussion of these texts belongs to the next chapter, which is devoted to a consideration of prophetic functions.

Secondly, there is the fact that prophetic figures are found at cultic places. It is clear that these two factors overlap for, as with the references in Jeremiah, it is argued that if prophets were to be found at cultic places then they must there have been performing cultic functions. We have seen, however, that this inference is no more than plausible and many scholars warn that we must not conclude too much from such references.<sup>2</sup> We must remember that the 'cultic' prophet is, indeed, no more than a theory. Thirdly, there is the existence in the Psalms of oracular form.<sup>3</sup>

The most important question in this chapter on 'types' of prophet concerns the frequent equation of 'cultic' prophet with other 'types' and especially with 'institutional' prophet. This equation would seem to be more than reasonable, at least in early prophecy, since the court and the cult were so closely related.<sup>4</sup> Nathan and Gad, for instance, who were

1. See above, pp.55f.

2. So, e.g., Rowley, see above, p.74.

3. For full treatment of the 'cultic' prophet hypothesis, see ch.III i.

4. Before the monarchy, the cult is intimately related to the life of community. With the establishment of the monarchy, come new cultic forms and a close link between the cult  
(Contd.)



court prophets, were clearly linked to the cult. It is important to notice, however, that prophets who, it is claimed, had cultic connections,<sup>1</sup> seem to have maintained an attitude of independence vis-à-vis the king. We do well, therefore, to beware of making these identifications too easily. It is unnecessary to repeat here what was said earlier about softening the lines between professional and unprofessional, ecstatic and non-ecstatic, true and false, cultic and non-cultic. As we saw in relation to Am.7:10-17, these possibilities of equating one 'type' of prophet with another need to be recognised whilst at the same time they need to be kept open.

This is nowhere more important than with regard to the last 'type' of prophet dealt with in this chapter, viz., the 'false' prophet.

#### iv) 'False' prophets

It is said that there have been two tendencies this century in the study of false prophecy: a denial of valid criteria for distinguishing the false from the true prophet, and the attempt to understand reasons for the phenomenon of false prophecy, particularly the human ingredient of all prophecy.<sup>2</sup> In his list of what were at one time thought to

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Contd.) and the court, at Jerusalem and at the royal sanctuaries (see 1 Kgs.12, where the cultic structure is intended to reinforce the importance of the monarchy).

1. e.g., Elijah, according to Johnson, see above, pp.72-74.

2. Crenshaw, Prophetic Conflict, p.13.

be valid criteria, Crenshaw gives fulfilment and non-fulfilment, undivided allegiance to Yahweh or apostasy from Yahweh to Baal, the revelatory form (e.g. dream, visions, etc.), and the promise of weal or woe. The factors which he considers to lead to 'the inevitability of false prophecy' are desire for success, the king, popular theology, the power of tradition, and the emergence of individualism. The meaning of these and other criteria and factors will now be explored as this relates to the position and function of the so-called 'false' prophet as a type.

The foregoing discussion of categories of prophetic persons in Israel is dominated by the conclusion that, in spite of the existence of definite differences between one sort of prophet and another, the variety of prophetic activity and the ambivalent nature of the evidence about the prophet's relation to the king and to the cult make it difficult to categorise at all. Terms like 'professional' and 'cultic' must be used with care if the use of them is not to beg important questions concerning the origin and nature of prophecy. This is particularly so when it comes to examining the relationship between early and canonical prophets. Nonetheless, these terms continue to be used and, moreover, identifications are made between one type of prophet and another, e.g. 'professional' prophets are often identified with 'cultic' prophets. Now all three of the groups mentioned so far, viz., 'ecstatic', 'institutional', and 'cultic' prophets, have been identified with 'false' prophets, this being based on the view that the 'false' prophets of the OT were recognisable by ecstatic experience

and behaviour, by belonging to the court, or by performing cultic functions and being located in cultic settings.<sup>1</sup>

Involved in all this is the relation of the canonical prophets to any of these varieties of prophets and it is suggested that the prophets whom the canonical prophets denounced (e.g. Hos.9:7; Ezek.13:17ff.) were of a particular type, e.g., ecstatic.

The lie to this, however, is given by much OT material. For 'had it been merely that the canonical prophets were non-ecstatic, or that they were non-professional, while the others were professional prophets, we should have expected the fact to be far more clearly indicated'.<sup>2</sup> As Rowley says, Isaiah met Ahaz (Isa.7:3ff.) much as Nathan had met David, or Elijah Ahab. No difference in status as compared with the prophets from whom it is usual to distinguish him can be established. The inner cleavage between the prophets first appears, he points out, with Micaiah (1 Kgs.22), and it is clear that Micaiah is a prophet in the same sense as the other four hundred. Similarly, when Jeremiah confronts Hananiah in the Temple (Jer.28:1ff.), it is clearly a conflict between two men who claim a like status. There is nothing in externals to distinguish them. Were there then no criteria by which to distinguish the true prophet from the 'false'?

Many prophetic books contain sharp attacks on other prophets (e.g. Hos.4:5; Isa.28:7; Mic.3:11; Zeph.3:4), but

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1. For the identification of 'cultic' and 'false' prophets, see further the discussion of Am.7:10-17 in ch.V.

2. Rowley in The Servant of the Lord, pp.113f.

the sharpest and most detailed occur in Jer. and Ezek., when the conflict between opposed groups within the prophetic circles seems to have been brought to a head. In the thought of Jeremiah the question of false prophecy occupied a unique place. Within the book, there are numerous oracles and narratives which show the prophet in conflict with opponents, whose teaching he brands as false.<sup>1</sup> Crenshaw stresses that the Massoretic Text has no word for 'false prophet' and that there is a difference between the assertion within the Hebrew texts that these prophets spoke falsehood and the Greek word, pseudoprophetes. For the Hebrew words refer to the content of the prophetic message whereas the Greek term focuses upon the character of the prophet.<sup>2</sup> This statement draws attention to the fundamental division which exists between the various criteria which have been suggested for distinguishing between true and false prophecy. Some of these focus upon the man and some on the message. Both are found in the references to false prophecy in the book of Jeremiah and this fact, combined with the fact that the subject is of such importance for this prophet, makes the Book of Jeremiah a good starting-point for an examination of these criteria. The passage already mentioned, ch.28, is crucial in this discussion.

It has been said that the account of Jeremiah's confrontation with Hananiah makes plain that Jeremiah had

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1. The classic expression of his hostility to these prophets is found in 23:9-40, a complex of originally separate sayings in poetry and in prose, which have been brought together because of their common theme.
  2. Crenshaw, op.cit., p.6. We noted in ch.I the way in which the LXX at this point makes the Hebrew more explicit.

not worked out the criteria on a theoretical and distinguishing basis. Hananiah's falsity is not immediately obvious to Jeremiah. He comes forward to speak in the name of Yahweh and uses the messenger formula (vv.1,2). It is prophecy against prophecy. Further, it is argued that, although Jeremiah himself mentions the fulfilment of prophecy as a check on the validity of Hananiah's message (v.9), it is evident that the contest is not resolved on this issue. Jeremiah did not wait for two years to elapse before returning to confront his opponent, nor does he even mention the matter of non-fulfilment when he returns (v.5).<sup>1</sup>

The problem of non-fulfilment goes back to the early days of prophecy. We learn (1 Sam.9:6) that a prophet was accepted because 'what he says surely comes to pass'. The early prophet or seer held, at least in this respect, a position somewhat similar to that of a diviner of the surrounding heathen nations.<sup>2</sup> That such a conception of prophecy was held in Jeremiah's day is evident from Deuteronomy where fulfilment is offered as one of the criteria of true prophecy. In Dt.18, where all practices of divination, augury, and witchcraft are sternly forbidden, it is said that the false prophet can be recognised as such if his prophecy is not verified by events (v.22. cf. Dt.13:1ff. where the other Deuteronomic criterion, allegiance to Yahweh, is also given). It is obvious, however, that this offers no help in determining true prophecy. As Guillaume

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1. Overholt, The Threat of Falsehood, p.39.

2. Guillaume, op.cit., p.348.



puts it, 'if it is possible, as the Deuteronomist assumes, that a false prophet should be able to give a sign or a wonder, it must also be possible that a false prophet, i.e., one who has no direct commission from Yahweh, should be able to foretell an event which would come to pass'.<sup>1</sup> There is here, therefore, nothing by which we can arrive at a criterion of true prophecy.

It is to be remarked that for many years Jeremiah was, according to this view, in the position of a false prophet, as his prophecy of complete national disaster remained for years unfulfilled. He seems to have been conscious that he could be vindicated only by the coming of the disaster which he had predicted and he felt keenly the difficulty which such a situation created (e.g. 17:15ff.).

There are mentioned in Jeremiah other features by which the 'false' prophets were characterised.<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah held that they were false because by their lives they showed that they had no conception of the ethical nature of Yahweh and of his demands upon men (23:14). They practised divination (  $\square \circ p$  e.g. 14:14). (The diviners were not always prophets, but they were always in league with the false prophets and agreed with their prophecies of peace in opposition to Jeremiah.) They experienced an ecstasy which was highly contagious and which seems to have led to that unanimity in falsehood which Jeremiah lamented (23:30). They played on the credulity of the people, claiming that

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1. Ibid., p.349.

2. Ibid., p.353 and Lindblom, PAI, p.213.

what they had received in dreams had the authority of prophetic vision (23:28).<sup>1</sup> The fact remains, however, that none of these can have formed a distinct criterion for distinguishing true prophets from false or a confrontation such as that narrated in ch.28 could not have occurred.

It was stated earlier that some of the various criteria that have been suggested focus not upon the man, his character and experience, but upon the message which he delivers. Overholt, for instance, claims that 'the designation of these prophetic opponents as "false" rests on nothing except the specific content of their message'.<sup>2</sup> By far the most important of these criteria is also raised in Jer.28, and that is the criterion of weal or woe.

It has become almost a commonplace that the great pre-exilic prophets predicted doom, whereas the 'false' prophets promised peace to the people of God. Central to von Rad's argument, for instance, is the contention that 'false' prophets delivered messages of well-being.<sup>3</sup> It is, therefore, no surprise that recent writers have emphasised the cultic function of prophecy, namely the promotion of the welfare of the state. von Rad himself assumes that Jeremiah's opponents were cultic officials because of their

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1. In rejecting dreams as a means of Yahweh's revelation, Jeremiah would seem to be something of an anomaly. For the most part in the OT it is simply assumed that the dream is a legitimate and effective means by which Yahweh communicated with men (e.g. Gen.40:8; Num.12:6; Joel 3:1). Further, dreams are connected with prophecy as part of the prophet's endowment (e.g. Dt.13:1-6). Some suggest, therefore, that here the condemnation is not of the forms themselves, but of a common abuse of them. A dream may, in fact, contain a revelation from Yahweh, but there are also false dreams which do not (v.32). See, e.g., Overholt, op.cit., pp.64ff.

2. Ibid., pp.76,80, etc.

3. von Rad, 'Die falschen Propheten', ZAW, 51, 1933, pp.109-120.

emphasis upon the return of the holy vessels and the promise of peace 'in this place', i.e., the temple (Jer.14:13).

There are three distinct questions here, however. Firstly, were 'false' prophets prophets of weal? Secondly, were 'cultic' prophets prophets of weal, and thirdly, were 'false' prophets 'cultic' prophets? Attention must first be directed to the question of weal or woe.

Jer.28 provides biblical support for the notion that the true prophet was essentially a prophet of woe, for it shows Jeremiah apparently judging the comforting promise of Hananiah on the basis of the prophetic tradition: 'The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many nations and great kingdoms' (28:8), and such a verdict would seem to be confirmed by the message of the opponents of Micaiah ben Imlah (1 Kgs.22). The immediate objection to this is the one already mentioned, i.e., that if prophesying weal was the mark of a 'false' prophet as distinct from a true, then Jeremiah would have had little difficulty in asserting his authenticity when confronted with Hananiah. There are, in addition, other major objections.

Firstly, it is highly unlikely that the prophetic word of these 'false' messages is fixed. It has been argued that Dt.18:21f. and its assurance that the people of God need not be afraid of the prophets who speak a word that does not come to pass would be meaningless unless the prophecy were one of woe.<sup>1</sup> Against this, however, should be placed

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1. So Crenshaw, op.cit., p.53.

Lindblom's interpretation of this passage - 'It is said that such a prophet is not to be feared. It would be meaningless to say that they should not fear a prophecy which has not come true. What the law-maker means is that when a prophet's oracle does not come true, this shows that the prophet has not brought forth Yahweh's word. People should not fear such a prophet'.<sup>1</sup> This does seem the more straightforward interpretation and brings the criterion expressed in Dt. into line with that in Jer.28:9 and Ezek.33:33. However, Mic.3:5 remains in support of the view that 'false' prophets did on occasion prophesy woe.

Secondly, the preserved prophecies of 'true' prophets contain words of weal and woe almost side by side, especially Isaiah. H.H. Rowley, for example, rejects the view that woe was of the essence of true prophecy and that the prophets of weal who opposed the canonical prophets stand exposed by that fact.<sup>2</sup> It is true, he says, that the greater prophets were usually prophets of woe, but Isaiah was just as truly a prophet when he promised the deliverance of Jerusalem as when he opposed the anti-Assyrian policy. Rowley stresses that the prophet's message was ever related to his view of God - '...the man who had known God in the immediacy of this own experience, and who under the constraint of that experience addressed himself to the needs of the world which he saw in the light of his knowledge of God, spoke a word which was at once his own and not his own'.

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1. Lindblom, PAI, p.214, note 185.

2. Rowley, in The Servant of the Lord, pp.131-134.

This, he thinks, was probably true in some measure of the false prophets, so that there was no clearcut distinction that the contemporaries or successors could easily discern. 'It was at bottom a difference in the experience of God and in the understanding of His nature and will'. This lack of external criteria seems to be acknowledged by von Rad, whose opinions in his Theology appear to have been modified since his earlier article, for here he mentions particularly Jeremiah's evident groping for practical criteria by which to identify the 'false' prophet (28:5-9).<sup>1</sup>

Crenshaw, who points out some of these obstacles, concludes, however, that 'despite all these objections to the criterion of the prediction of woe, nevertheless, there is a real sense in which the standard can be used profitably in evaluating classical prophecy'.<sup>2</sup> There is strong and convincing support for this positive stand and the sense in which this standard can be used will now be considered.

A number of scholars have drawn attention to the importance of the historical moment in prophecy, notably Martin Buber, who perceived the significance of the historical moment for the prophetic word and held that the correct interpretation of the times was the key to the distinction between true and 'false' prophecy.<sup>3</sup> He writes, 'It is not whether salvation or disaster is prophesied, but whether the prophecy, whatever it is, agrees with the divine demand, meant by a certain historical situation that is

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1. von Rad, OT Theology, II, pp.209f.

2. Crenshaw, op.cit., p.53.

3. Buber, op.cit., pp.62,178.



important. The true prophet is a realistic politician, in the sense that he views the total historical situation before formulating a message'. Conversely, the 'false' prophet is said to be one who has taken conditional promises and made them unconditional certainties for all time. Thus, Buber claims, the main 'falsity' of these prophets lies not in the fact that they prophesy salvation but that what they prophesy is not dependent on question or alternative. The true prophet on the other hand, 'does not announce an immutable decree. He speaks into the power of decision lying in the moment...'.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Overholt says that, 'the crucial criterion for judging the validity of the utterances of prophetic opponents is the relevance of the content of their message to the contemporary situation'.<sup>2</sup> The 'falsehood' (  $\gamma\psi\omega$  ) of the 'false' prophets resides precisely in their strengthening of a sense of security in an evil people (23:14).<sup>3</sup> He points out that if our criterion of falsehood is salvation then no great prophet may utter any words of hope and Jeremiah himself would have to be judged as a 'false' prophet. Thus, the problem is not one involving the prophetic message abstracted from its historical context. 'It is the historical context which makes an otherwise unobjectionable message "false"'. So, in ch.28, says Overholt,

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1. Ibid., pp.103,174ff.

2. Overholt, op.cit., p.62; cf. von Rad, OT Theology, II, pp.112f., where the mark of the canonical prophets is said to be their ability to adjust and adapt to historical events and changes.

3. Ibid., cf. Lindblom, PAI, p.213; and Osswald, Falsche Prophetie im Alten Testament, pp.20ff.

Hananiah is guilty of a misreading of Israel's election faith. He applies an old message in a new situation. The prophets referred to in Jeremiah and elsewhere are then not false because they prophesy salvation, but because they prophesy salvation which is out of touch with the true seriousness of the situation.

Thus, the true prophetic task is to interpret, and any obstacle to this freedom to interpret is likely to produce false prophecy. Now it is obvious that, if a correct assessment of the historical situation is the pre-requisite for prophecy, a true prophet could easily err in his evaluation, especially if a particular evaluation were expected of him. It is here that the second two questions arise, were 'cultic' prophets characteristically prophets of weal and, closely related to this, were 'false' prophets 'cultic' prophets? For it has been suggested that a cultic position constitutes one such obstacle, making it at least plausible that 'cultic' prophets were 'false' prophets.

There are a number of factors which have been put forward as possible obstacles to the prophet's task of interpreting the historical situation and leading him to proclaim  $\square\iota\lambda\psi$  regardless. There is firstly the temptation to prophesy peace from sheer greed of gain (e.g. Mic.3:5).<sup>1</sup> This is not only because people always prefer good news to bad, but above all, because it was believed that the preaching of  $\square\iota\lambda\psi$  really created  $\square\iota\lambda\psi$ .<sup>2</sup> This is, of course, related to the problem of whether there

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1. See Harms, Die Falschen Propheten.

2. Lindblom, PAI, p.203.

were in Israel prophets who were 'professional', in the sense of being paid, and of the relation of such prophets to the cult. It has been argued, says Crenshaw, that the 'false' prophet was a professional, cultic official living off the proceeds of his ministry. Crenshaw's verdict is that 'the existence of such cultic prophets can no longer be doubted, but the evidence in no way points to these prophets as false'.<sup>1</sup> For, he asks, what reason do we have to deny to the cultic prophets the freedom to be faithful to Yahweh?

Secondly, there is the desire for success. This, it is urged, is not a selfish attitude, but an authentic expression of hope that God's word is trustworthy.<sup>2</sup> In a sense, it is his success which confirms the prophet in his rôle as God's messenger.<sup>3</sup> Other suggestions include the power of tradition, in terms of institution, messianism and nationalism,<sup>4</sup> the crowd, whose esteem was craved by most prophets,<sup>5</sup> the emergence of individualism,<sup>6</sup> and popular theology.<sup>7</sup>

One of the chief obstacles to the faithful fulfilment of the prophetic task was, it is thought, the king.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Crenshaw, op.cit., p.56.

2. Ibid., p.65.

3. Jacob, 'Quelques remarques sur les faux prophètes', ThZ, 13, 1957, p.485.

4. Ibid., p.484, and Crenshaw, op.cit., pp.71ff.

5. Ibid., p.484.

6. Crenshaw, op.cit., pp.74-77.

7. Ibid., pp.69ff. and Jacob, op.cit., p.485.

8. cf. Num.22-24 (especially 22:13,18,20,35,38; 23:3,12,26; 24:13) with 1 Kgs.22:1-28 (especially v.14) and Jer.42. That the prophet must say what God gives him to say is the nearest that we get to a criterion of true prophecy. When predicting the future, the 'false' prophet tries to satisfy human wishes and the desire for prosperity, whilst the true prophet prophesies God's word. When performing a ritual act, the 'false' prophet tries to influence the future, whilst the true prophet endeavours to enact God's word.

A.S. Herbert says that the prophetic function was to strengthen the king, and that frequent inquiry by royalty forced the prophet to rely on artificial stimulants, false prophecy being the result.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Jacob maintains that the monarchy was an obstacle to true prophecy, since the royal entourage included prophets who were paid.<sup>2</sup> Crenshaw writes, 'The royal interests frequently ran contrary to the divine, and any cult sponsored by the king was expected to further the interests of its supporter'.<sup>3</sup> It is worth quoting at length his statements here, as they obviously raise the vital question of the relationship between this tendency to false prophecy and the cult - 'The underlying assumption of king and priest is that royal sanctuaries exist for the sole function of promoting the welfare of the state, and anyone who fails to comply with this purpose is in danger of the king's wrath'. This perspective is reflected, he says, in 1 Kgs.22, where the prophetic function of strengthening the king in his military endeavour is at stake, and in Am.7:10-17. If it is accepted that there were in Israel prophets who had official connections with the institution of the monarchy and, therefore, with the cult, then the way is open for identifying the prophets whom the canonical prophets denounced, as such 'yes-men' and, therefore, equating 'cultic' and 'false' prophets.

Now we have already encountered one of the difficulties in this point of view but these and other considerations should now be looked at in more detail. One is that there

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1. Herbert, Worship in Ancient Israel, p.41.

2. Jacob, op.cit., p.484.

3. Crenshaw, op.cit., p.67.

seem to have been 'false' prophets among the prophets, who were not cultic prophets in the strict sense of the word. As Lindblom points out, Ezekiel inveighs against prophetesses who use magical methods and it is hard to believe that these are Temple prophetesses.<sup>1</sup> The reference in Jer.29 to false prophets in Babylonia also makes this identification impossible. In the narrative about Hananiah, Jeremiah's adversary, there is nothing to suggest that he was a cultic prophet. Also, if the division between true and 'false' prophets were so simple as one between cultic and non-cultic prophets it should have been possible to indicate it more simply than the OT does.

Another, less weighty, objection is that made by Overholt, who insists that Jeremiah is not condemning these prophets because of their association with the cult and cultic functionaries. It is not the notion of cultic prophecy which is here under attack. 'On the contrary', he writes, 'the call to intercession in v.17 (i.e., ch.27) becomes a kind of test of true prophecy, and is in effect a call to perform a liturgical action'. He, therefore, issues a warning against seeing a conflict here between cultic and independent prophecy. What is at issue is rather, he claims, the proper exercise of the prophetic function - 'Intercession is a part of every prophet's function and when properly exercised is not necessarily bound up with an easy proclamation of salvation'.<sup>2</sup> The value of this statement about prophetic functions will be one of the

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1. Lindblom, PAI, p.215.

2. Overholt, op.cit., p.36.



subjects of discussion in the next chapter. It is important to notice here, however, that Overholt does assume that the prophets who are under attack are in some sense 'cultic functionaries', though he does not make altogether clear why. Further, he thinks that no wedge can be driven between the task of these prophets and the task of prophets like Jeremiah. The questions that one inevitably wants to ask of Overholt are, were all these prophetic cultic functionaries earnest, but misguided, interpreters of history and if so, could Jeremiah well have been one of them in this office? Also, on what grounds does he make the judgement that these prophets are cultic functionaries if not the very fact that they prophesy salvation?

It is also significant that the view of the 'false' prophets as genuinely earnest messengers is far removed from that of Buber who sees the 'false' prophets as court and public servants, professional speakers who 'in the hour of decision, when all depends on recognising Yahweh's historic warnings and attending to his behests, set themselves against the warning with promises of salvation...'.<sup>1</sup>

There is, it must be said, considerable confusion over this question of the relation of cultic prophets, salvation prophets, and false prophets. The statements of C. Kuhl, for instance, on this point seem rather self-contradictory.<sup>2</sup> He says that the term 'false prophet' cannot be universally applied to all cultic prophets and prophets of weal. Yet he assumes that cultic and salvation prophets can be

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1. Buber, op.cit., p.176.

2. Kuhl, op.cit., pp.21f.

identified with each other and that they are generally distinguishable from the canonical prophets, - 'The prophets whose sayings are extant in the prophetic books are not all free agents. Among them is to be found more than one "cultic" or "salvation" prophet who predicts prosperity and peace forgetting his highest prophetic function of acting as the conscience of the people to rebuke it for its sins and to recall it to Yahweh'. Such statements do not seem likely to give great clarity to the matter.

A lack of clarity, however, is perhaps inevitable in this subject. Certainly there is a feature of the biblical material which demonstrates just how unclear was the distinction between true and 'false' prophets and which further militates against the idea that 'false' prophets were 'cultic' prophets and, thus, easily recognisable. This is the evidence that prophets were susceptible to transition from true to false prophecy and vice versa.<sup>1</sup> This is best illustrated by the puzzling and scandalous passage in 1 Kgs. 13.<sup>2</sup> The prophet is seen here in a remarkable double light. He delivers first what is not and then what is the word of God.<sup>3</sup> Crenshaw writes, 'Is it possible that both men are

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1. e.g. Jer.15:19. See Crenshaw, op.cit., p.53, and Jacob, op.cit., p.486. The ease with which this can happen is the theme of Harms's work cited above (p.115, n.1.).

2. This passage is commonly regarded as midrashic in character. See Gray, 1 and 2 Kings, p.298 and Montgomery, The Book of Kings, p.20. 1 Kgs.22 provides another example, however.

3. See Jepsen, 'Gottesman und Prophet', Probleme Biblischer Theologie, pp.173-182, where he thinks that this perhaps hints at the scepticism with which the prophet was regarded in Josiah's time, as seen also in Jer. and Dt. Quell also deals with this chapter in his examination of true and 'false' prophets. Here we see both and are confronted with the problem of authentication.

prophets in the employ of Yahweh, and that the appellation "false prophet" is of no value in this context? And if this be the case in 1 Kgs.13, can it also be true of other similar claims on the part of the prophets whose message and conduct differed from the usual stripe of prophecy in the OT?'.

All this suggests not only that the 'false' prophets cannot be identified with a particular type of prophet but also that they may not be essentially different from the canonical prophets (which, of course, reminds us that the 'canonical' prophets would not be recognisable as such in ancient Israel), and brings us back to the question of whether or not these 'false' prophets prophesied in good faith.

Many scholars hold the view that in the last resort there is no external, demonstrable criterion for distinguishing between true and 'false' prophets. Quell, for example, admits the failure of the various criteria offered because, he says, we always come up against one or other of two imponderables, the person of the prophet and the fact of God's revelation through the prophets.<sup>1</sup> The problem is seen, he contends, to be essentially religious rather than theological. The claim to divine authority has to be believed and trusted in, but cannot be proved because, 'Prophetie ist nicht von Menschen, und was von Menschen ist, ist nicht Prophetie'.<sup>2</sup> Only another prophet can, he thinks, distinguish the true from the false.

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1. Quell, Wahre und falsche Propheten.

2. Ibid., p.190.

This last point is made by a number of scholars, who argue that the mark of the true prophet is his intimacy with and his knowledge of the God.<sup>1</sup> Now the mode of his consciousness of knowledge of the divine will cannot be analysed. It is not communicable.<sup>2</sup> The true prophet speaks of himself as one who has felt the hand of Yahweh upon him (Jer.15:7), has heard the word of Yahweh and been sent (Jer.23:21,23 etc.), has stood in the council of Yahweh (Jer.23:18,22). But these metaphors do not tell us the psychological ground of difference between true and false prophet; 'they witness only to ecstatic and mystical experiences. There is nothing in the form of the experience which constitutes a specific difference between the true and the false'.<sup>3</sup> A.B. Davidson writes, '...while the true prophet was immovably convinced of the truth and divineness of what he uttered, still the grounds of his conviction were peculiar to himself, and could not be communicated, and were of such a kind that men might feel assured falsely, that is, might mistake them..."Being moved by the spirit" was not a thing so distinctive but that it might be confused with one's own natural emotions. Probably it had no characteristics by which it could be distinguished from the natural activities of the mind itself'.<sup>4</sup> He continues,

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1. e.g., Jacob, op.cit., p.486; Kraus, Prophetie in der Krisis; Mowinckel, in JBL, 53, 1934, pp.218-226.

2. So Guillaume, op.cit., p.361.

3. Ibid., p.360.

4. Davidson, OT Prophecy, pp.113f.

'Though the true prophet was sure himself of being so, yet the grounds of his assurance, being subjective, could not be formulated so as to prevent a man deceiving himself and being a sincere false prophet...'. He thinks that it is quite incredible that the numerous class of prophets who were undoubtedly false were all intentionally so. There was, he believes, no immediate proof to a false prophet of his not being true.

It is worth noting, in passing, that Mowinckel, although he would agree that the essence of true prophecy was knowledge of Yahweh, would reject the view that the true prophet felt himself 'moved by the spirit', and would object that there was something in the form of the experience which constituted a specific difference between the true and the false. It is to be remarked, however, that the criteria of true prophecy which Mowinckel offers<sup>1</sup> are very vague, not to say contradictory, and, as argued in ch.I, such a division between 'ecstatic' and 'non-ecstatic' prophets cannot be pressed.

The importance of the prophet's inner conviction of his having been sent and of his having Yahweh's word suggests that the true prophet lacked an office which he could claim as authentication of his message.<sup>2</sup> This is confirmed by the conflict of the canonical prophets with other prophets and by their stress on their call. On the other hand, it would seem that official status was not necessarily the

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1. Mowinckel, in JBL, 53, 1934, pp.213-226.

2. Whether this means that the true prophet lacked an office altogether will be considered in the following chapters, particularly ch.V.



mark of the 'false' prophet, or all 'institutional' prophets would have been subservient to the king and clearly recognisable as 'false'. There can, therefore, have been no clear difference in status. Nonetheless, there is strong evidence to suggest that the 'false' prophets denounced by the canonical prophets were likely to be found in institutional, cultic circles.

There is, in the first place, the fact that these prophets are often mentioned in connection with the priests (e.g. Jer.14:18).<sup>1</sup> Further, these prophets seem to have been characterised by a tendency to proclaim  $\square \text{ל} \psi$  when the moral and political state of the nation gave them no grounds for so doing (e.g. Jer.23:16f.), and this tendency could well have been produced by the official expectations of the prophets within the institution of the cult. The evidence from the Psalms which suggests that there may have been 'cultic' prophets whose function was to proclaim  $\square \text{ל} \psi$  will be considered below, but it is reasonable to suppose that if a prophet, because of his relation to the court or cult, was not responsive or honest to the situation of the day, he was liable to be false. Lindblom's is perhaps the best last word. '...the most that can be inferred is that perhaps the majority of the "false prophets" were to be found among the cultic prophets. This is quite natural, because one of the main professional tasks of these cultic prophets was to announce  $\text{šālôm}$  in the interest of the royal

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1. See below, ch.III, pp.156ff.

house and of official policy, to encourage the people, and by the power of their prophetic words influence the course of events in a favourable direction'.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Lindblom, PAI, p.215.

CHAPTER IIIPROPHETIC FUNCTIONS AND THEIR SETTING

This thesis is an enquiry into whether there existed in ancient Israel a prophetic office. We have seen that, to a large extent, this depends on how one defines the term 'office'. It is possible, for instance, to use the term of any task performed by a prophetic person,<sup>1</sup> in which case every prophet will have an office and the enquiry will be over. But this is neither the most natural nor the most common understanding of the term 'office' and the enquiry is, in fact, a controversial one. An 'office' can be understood as a particular post or position, into which someone is installed and then the enquiry concerns the status or position of the prophet in ancient Israel. It was suggested earlier, however, that this definition could be extended and that 'office' would then be understood as the specific task or function attached to a certain position or post, or as the task expected and required of a person who has been given a position by king, state or public body.<sup>2</sup> Thus, an enquiry into the prophetic 'office' becomes an enquiry into prophetic functions.

There have been a number of arguments put forward to the effect that the term 'office' should not be used at all in relation to the OT prophets. One is that the idea of prophetic office is absent from the OT of necessity, as OT prophecy rests on an independent, divine calling. This is

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1. As does von Rad, See above, ch.II, p.56.

2. See above, ch.II, p.56.

argued particularly by Martin Noth;<sup>1</sup> but this dichotomy between office and vocation, or institution and charisma, is also implicit in the treatment of prophecy given by other scholars.<sup>2</sup> The strength of this argument will be considered more fully in the final section of this chapter and again in ch.V in connection with the prophet's call and inspiration. A second objection is that 'office' suggests something static, whilst function is essentially dynamic and, therefore, more closely corresponds to the activity of the OT prophet. Whether or not this is, in fact, the case will, I hope, become clear in the following examination of prophetic functions. A third argument is that there is in Israel such diversity of prophetic activity that it is not possible to speak of one prophetic office. Clearly, only an examination of the actual prophetic activity can determine whether or not this objection is valid.

The functions of the early prophets in Israel have been discussed in the earlier chapters. The major conclusions from this examination were as follows. Firstly, there is a wide variety of prophetic persons and of prophetic functions. Secondly, there is a lack of clear evidence of official installation, appointment and control, yet these prophets clearly had official functions in the court and in the cult, and thirdly, and closely related to this, far from being subject to the king, one of the early prophet's tasks seems to have been to rebuke the king for his religious and moral failings.

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1. Noth, 'Office and Vocation in the OT', The Laws in the Pentateuch and other Essays, pp.229-49.
  2. e.g. Eichrodt, Theology of the OT, I, pp.391 etc.

Though much of this may perhaps be carried through into canonical prophecy, we have seen that the relationship between early and canonical prophecy is much debated and we must recognise that the functions and position of the early prophets do not necessarily tell us anything about the functions and position of the canonical prophets. So then, attention must be directed to the canonical prophets themselves.

There is, it should be remembered, the recurrent danger of assuming the canonical prophets to be a homogeneous group. Even so it is surely legitimate to see if they have functions in common and if any or all of them are in any sense official. There are clearly functions that can be regarded as 'prophetic', in that prophets perform them and are regarded both by others and themselves as authorised to perform them. We need, then, to look at these functions, noting that not all prophets were necessarily expected to perform exactly the same functions, and in the same combination, and to consider whether these functions constitute any sort of office. Because of the differences that exist between the canonical prophets and because of the vastness of the subject, special attention will be directed here to Amos and Jeremiah, and detailed examination given of one particular 'prophetic' function, viz., intercession.

These functions will be examined according to their setting. It was stated in Chapter II that the idea of a cultic prophetic office arises because of the evidence of apparently cultic functions and apparently cultic settings. The cultic links of the early prophets have already been



discussed, but there are two sets of passages related to this question of cultic prophecy which must now be considered. These are in the Books of Chronicles and Jeremiah. The second especially raises the question of the relationship between prophets and priests, particularly as regards their respective communications of God's will, i.e., their teaching 'office'. The other evidence for the 'cultic' prophet hypothesis is oracular form, notably in the Psalms. This is to anticipate slightly ch.IV, but these texts will be considered here, since they are often regarded as evidence of a prophetic 'office' (or at least functions) in a cultic setting, which may or may not constitute a cultic office. This will be the main area of exploration in this chapter, since it is there that the question of prophetic 'office' is, rightly or wrongly, centred in modern scholarship. It should be stressed, however, that the chapter is not concerned to discuss the whole issue of cultic prophecy, for cultic prophecy is only one part, though a major one, of the enquiry into the office and function of the OT prophet. A number of Psalms will be considered for the evidence which they give of oracular form and of possible cultic functions, such as oracles, enquiry of God, dramatic symbolism, and intercession, though these functions, if cultic at all, are certainly not confined to a cultic setting and they will, therefore, be considered further in the second section on public action and utterance.

There is also, of course, the court as a setting for prophetic functions. The relation of the canonical prophets to the monarchy and to the political affairs of their day is

of great importance in an enquiry into the status and functions of the prophet and has received much attention.<sup>1</sup> Lindblom says, 'As can be seen particularly from the history of Isaiah and Jeremiah, important prophets were often summoned by the kings in critical situations. They could also appear before them on their own initiative, and thus could have a great influence on political life if the kings listened to them'. But he continues, 'Their main task was, however, to preach wherever people assembled'.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the court cannot be altogether separated from the area of public life and it therefore seems reasonable to consider these functions in this wider setting. Furthermore, as we found with regard to early prophecy, the court and the cult are integrally related. So it is hoped that the main points of importance here will emerge without devoting a separate section to the court and the 'political' function of the prophet.

In section ii), headed 'Public Action and Utterance', four functions will be examined, those of a) messenger, b) spokesman, c) watchman, and d) intercessor. They cannot all be explored in great detail and special consideration will be given to the last of these, since it focuses many of the questions concerning prophetic office and function. This general area of intercession will itself be narrowed down to concentrate on intercession in Jeremiah.

One of the major difficulties in identifying and

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1. e.g., Kraus, Prophetie und Politik; and Elliger, 'Prophet and Politik', ZAW, 53, 1935, pp.3-22.

2. Lindblom, PAI, p.203.

treating any one prophetic function is that these functions appear to overlap. Some scholars, for instance, understand the watchman to be essentially the intercessor.<sup>1</sup> These interrelationships are further shown and the difficulty increased by the fact that terms such as 'spokesman' or 'mediator' are used by different scholars to denote different functions. So, for example, there is the suggestion that the prophet as spokesman is the 'mediator' between God and men in the sense of mediating the divine law, whilst, so it is argued, the prophet as intercessor is a 'mediator' in another sense. It is important to remember here that the terms used are ultimately of little importance compared with the functions which they denote. It does not matter, for instance, whether 'mediator' is the term chosen to describe Jeremiah's position. What does matter is whether Jeremiah mediated and, if so, in what sense.

The final section of this chapter (iii) will look briefly at the Deuteronomic laws about prophets and the Deuteronomic presentation of prophecy<sup>2</sup> and then make some attempt to decide whether the term 'office' can reasonably be used in connection with the canonical prophets.

#### i) The Cult

##### a) 1 and 2 Chronicles

Before turning to the passages which relate to the position and functions of the prophets in connection with

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1. e.g., Eichrodt, 'Das prophetische Wächteramt', in Tradition und Situation.

2. This subject will also be touched on when considering the prophet as spokesman, since it is from Deuteronomy that the notion of a prophetic 'law-speaker' derives.

the cult, it is necessary to consider briefly the outlook of the Chronicler. 1 and 2 Chr. are now commonly held to form the major part of an historical work which is in some ways parallel to and also different from the Deuteronomic history. Like the Deuteronomic history, they reflect a distinctive point of view, interpreting Israel's past history from the standpoint of the age of the Chronicler. The author delights in all that pertains to the ministry of the sanctuary and introduces a great deal of new material, concerning it, its religious celebrations and officers (e.g. 1 Chr.23-27). As Myers points out, the position of the cultus sketched by the Chronicler required an extensive organisation of personnel. The Chronicler was meticulous about the proper character, appointment, and service of those who officiated, because of the serious view he took of the demands of the Yahwistic religion of his time.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the work, we are presented with the importance of the Levites, who had many functions, including those of gatekeeper (1 Chr.15:23) and bearers of the ark (1 Chr.15:15) and who performed other important rôles as judges (2 Chr. 19:8,11), prophets (2 Chr.20:14f.), and royal functionaries (1 Chr.26:20-30). Again and again it is stated that they acted on the orders of the king (e.g. 2 Chr.8:15). There is also some evidence that they were invested with priestly functions, at least on certain occasions (e.g. 2 Chr.29:5ff.). They were thus important cult functionaries, though, for the most part, under the direction of the priests.

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1. Myers, 1 Chronicles, pp. LXVIII-LXXI.

So far as prophets are concerned, Myers holds the view that the Chronicler's regard for the prophet is somewhat different from that of the Deuteronomist.<sup>1</sup> That he has great respect for them is obvious partly from the fact that although Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Shemaiah, and Jehu, the son of Hanani, are mentioned by name by both the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler, only the latter refers to a collection of oracles from each of them. Also, the Chronicler refers to five prophets not mentioned in Samuel and Kings; - Iddo, Azariah, the son of Obed, Eliezer, Jeremiah and Noadiah (Neh.6:14). In addition, he represents Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, prophesying (2 Chr.24:20), a Levite giving an oracle in the assembly (2 Chr.20:14-17), and he designates Heman (1 Chr.25:3,5), Asaph (2 Chr.29:30), and Jeduthun (2 Chr.35:15) as seers ( ד'ִּיָּן ). As purveyors of the word of Yahweh, the prophets spoke with authority (e.g. 1 Chr.17:3; 2 Chr.11:2; 36:21f; 29:25). Yet, says Myers, the Chronicler's outlook and emphasis differ from those in Kgs. in that virtually all these messages are lacking in specifically moral content, and have to do almost exclusively with oracular matters related to the cult. He asserts that the individual messages of the prophets are so watered down that they all say almost the same thing. Nonetheless, the prophets are of great importance and are regarded without exception as men of God, delivering his message to the house of David.

More important for the question of prophetic 'office', however, is a comparison not between the Deuteronomist's

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1. Ibid., pp.LXXV-LXXVII.



and the Chronicler's interest in the prophets but between the Chronicler's interest in the prophets and his interest in the priests and Levites. It was once suggested that this interest differed from the outset because for the Chronicler the prophets were no longer a living institution when he wrote. His conception of the personality and office of the prophets was entirely based upon ancient literature and he took no professional interest in the order.<sup>1</sup> Be this as it may, for the Chronicler both prophet and priest are religious personages; otherwise they differ widely in almost every particular. Bennett argues that whilst the priest holds a religious office, the term 'office' has to be unjustifiably strained in order to apply it to the prophet. The qualifications, status, duties, and rewards of the priests are fully prescribed by rigid and elaborate rules, whilst the prophets are children of the spirit. The priest, for instance, had, in this later period, to be a physically perfect male of the house of Aaron; the prophet could be of any tribe and of either sex. The priestly or Levitical office, however, did not exclude its holder from the prophetic vocation (e.g. Jahaziel and Zechariah). Nonetheless, this can hardly be made to show that the prophet has a cultic office;<sup>2</sup> rather it shows how diverse the prophetic gift was. For, indeed, on occasion it was exercised by those whom we should scarcely call prophets at all. Pharaoh Necho's warning to Jehoshaphat (2 Chr.35), for example, is exactly parallel to the prophetic exhortations addressed to

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1. Bennett, The Books of Chronicles, pp.240-269.

2. See below, pp.139f.

other kings (cf. 1 Chr.12:18). The authority and status of the prophets rested on no official or material conditions, such as hedged in the priestly office on every side. Accordingly their ancestry, previous history, and social standing are matters with which the historian has no concern. They appear, in Chr. as elsewhere, abruptly and with no personal introduction, they deliver their messages and then disappear with equal abruptness. Sometimes not even their names are given.

The Chronicler does show, however, some prophets who seem to have exercised their gifts more systematically and constitutionally than the others, e.g., Gad and Nathan. Bennett points out that there is no mention of the sons of the prophets in Chronicles. This he takes as further evidence that for the Chronicler the prophetic gift was not something which could be acquired by training. Even Nathan and Gad, he says, were not official in a regulated sense; hence, their exclusion from the lists of David's ministers, where the priests appear. The prophet's sole qualification was his having the message and declaring the will of Yahweh. The Chronicler does not, in fact, recognise the professional prophet, for, says Bennett, 'Long before the Chronicler's time, the history and teaching of the great prophets has clearly established the distinction between the professional prophet, who was appointed by man or himself, and the inspired messenger, who received a direct commission from Jehovah'.

One's immediate reaction to this, however, is to ask why, if these distinctions are in reality so clear, do the

relationships between prophet and prophet, and between priest and prophet constitute some of the main controversies in OT study today. Bennett's view, with its stress on the division between priest and prophet sees in 1 and 2 Chr. prophetic figures who are charismatically inspired and lacking any sort of 'office'. How far this can be maintained today, in the face of the swing away from any sharp division between priest and prophet,<sup>1</sup> must now be considered with reference to particular passages. Just how far some scholars have moved from Bennett's position is demonstrated by the fact that the very same passages which he uses to establish the unofficial position of the prophet are used in the argument for the existence of official, cultic prophecy in Israel.

A.R. Johnson contends that the Chronicler presents us with cultic prophets who appear to form the personnel of the Temple choirs and who, merged with the other Levitical order, are in evident subjection to the Aaronite priesthood.<sup>2</sup> He argues that these prophets were the successors of the prophetic guilds in the first Temple and that the latter were themselves a continuation of those  $\square' \times' 11$  who are mentioned in the stories of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, sometimes in connection with a sanctuary. He reminds us that the first  $\square' \times' 11$  mentioned in the OT are described as descending from a local sanctuary to the accompaniment of various instruments (1 Sam.10) and then he turns to 1 Chr.25:1-6. Here, he says, we encounter the striking

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1. See, e.g., Welch, Prophet and Priest in Old Israel.

2. Johnson, CPAI, pp.69,75.

fact that the verbal form  $\text{X } \text{לל}$  , meaning 'to prophesy'. is used to denote the specific function of the Temple singers, and, in the same passage, Heman, who is one of the three conductors under whose direction the choirs performed, is described as 'the king's seer'.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the other two conductors, Asaph and Jeduthun, are each elsewhere described as 'the king's seer' (2 Chr.29:30; 35:15).<sup>2</sup>

In his belief that these early prophets were cultic prophets and that the Levitical singers probably took their place, Johnson is followed by Myers. The references to cult prophecy in 1 Chr.25:1-15 follow, says Myers, an old pattern (cf. 1 Sam.10:5-13). He regards 1 Chr.25:1-31 as an attempt to authenticate the position of the Levitical singers by referring the origin of their position to David. They are put on an organisational footing just like the priests and Levites. All are regarded as official cult personnel.<sup>3</sup>

An argument against the view that 1 Chr.25:1-31 witnesses to the existence of cultic prophets is constituted by the fact that  $\text{X } \text{לל}$  here may express not 'to prophesy' in any strict sense but 'action undertaken under a broader, more general, type of inspiration'.<sup>4</sup> Mowinckel himself admits that the reference may signify prophetic, in the

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1. Ibid., p.70.

2. Ibid., p.71.

3. Myers, op.cit., p.171. See also Welch, Prophet and Priest in Old Israel, p.130, note 2.

4. So Cody, A History of OT Priesthood, p.187, note 32.

sense of poetic, inspiration,<sup>1</sup> and de Vaux argues that 'to prophesy' alternates here with 'to sing' (1 Chr.25:6) and that when the Chronicler wants to speak of true prophetic inspiration he uses other words (see 2 Chr.20:14).<sup>2</sup> That

χ 11 in this context means simply to 'sing praise in the manner of the prophets' and that no specific office is implied is supported by the fact that a close connection always existed between music and prophecy, as Johnson himself points out. On the other hand, it does seem that the Levitical singers here are official cult personnel. They clearly formed a distinct and important class in the Temple worship when the Chronicler wrote, and even if 'prophesy' is taken in a musical sense here, there are a number of other references to prophets and prophecy in connection with the Temple which require explanation.

In 2 Chr.20:1-30, the Chronicler actually gives, in Johnson's view, a picture of a Temple prophet in the performance of his duty and represents him as a member not of a prophetic guild, but of a Temple choir, that of the 'sons' of Asaph.<sup>3</sup> Myers also regards this as 'a good illustration of how cult prophecy operated'. He goes on, '...at the time of the compiler of their list, cult prophecy must have been well established and claimed for its authority the appointment of classes of musicians in the service by none other than David. That they were regarded as Levites is

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1. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.26; cf., Myers, op.cit., p.172.

2. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, Its Life and Institutions, p.385.

3. Johnson, CPAI, pp.72f. See also Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, pp.17f., 21, 24, 27.



certain from 2 Chr.5:12; 29:12ff.'<sup>1</sup> Jehaziel is also a Levite and Myers takes it as certain that he is 'prophesying' from the fact that 'the spirit of the Lord' is said to have come upon him, and from the content of his message (vv.15ff.). Johnson describes this message as 'a typical oracle of "Peace"', ensuring success in time of war.<sup>2</sup> It is partly from this that Johnson draws his conclusion that the prophet was an important figure in the personnel of the cultus, to promote the  $\square 17\psi$  of the people. This element of his office, he believes, was and always had been central, but the Babylonian exile so discredited the prophet that 'the P school was ultimately able to reduce him to the rank of a Temple singer'.<sup>3</sup>

de Vaux objects to the use of this passage to prove that the singers were, in fact, cultic prophets. 2 Chr.24:20 is, he says, a close parallel to 2 Chr.20:14 and there, in the Temple, 'the spirit of God took possession of Zechariah', who then spoke, according to de Vaux, 'like a second Jeremiah'. But, de Vaux argues, Zechariah was the son of the priest Jehoiada and not one of the singers.<sup>4</sup> Johnson retorts that this is valueless as evidence against the existence of cultic prophets and that it merely serves to show that we must allow for the existence of a 'free' or 'charismatic' type of prophecy, for which he has always allowed.<sup>5</sup> But allowing for the existence of the free prophetic gift in the

1. Myers, op.cit., p.171.

2. Johnson, CPAI, p.73.

3. Ibid., p.63.

4. de Vaux, op.cit., p.385.

5. Johnson, CPAI, p.74, note 1.

Chronicler's view is far removed from the conclusion that the people who exercise it in 1 and 2 Chr. are Levitical singers, official, cultic personnel. As Cody puts it, 'One might object that the existence of prophets who prophesied in cultic situations is not yet a proof of their organization into well-defined groups; the texts in Chr. do imply such an organization, but without totally excluding prophecy in a cultic situation by an individual, not belonging to such a group (cf. 2 Chr.24:30)'.<sup>1</sup> de Vaux goes much further and says that, 'in spite of the terms used in 1 Chr.25:1f., there never was a class of prophets in the second Temple, and apparently the Chronicler himself did not think there had been such a class of men in the Temple before the Exile'.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, de Vaux and Cody argue persuasively against the identification of cultic prophets and Levitical singers, and in saying that the prophetic gift was exercised by people who were not Levitical singers Johnson fails to meet the point. He simply concedes that not all prophets were Levitical singers.

There is, indeed, very little evidence which can be gleaned from Chr. in support of Johnson's view that the Levitical singers were the successors of pre-exilic cultic prophets. In 2 Chr.29:25, Gad, the king's seer and Nathan, the prophet, are mentioned in connection with the music and songs of the Temple, but nowhere else is this the case, and even in 2 Chr.29:25 Gad and Nathan are not themselves said

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1. Cody, op.cit., p.187, note 32.

2. de Vaux, op.cit., p. 385.

to be musicians. Moreover, in view of the Chronicler's dominant interest in the cult and its personnel, it is difficult to see how any prophetic figures mentioned could possibly escape from being connected with the cult.

In support of the contention, however, that in Chr. 'prophet' can be equated with a Temple singer or Levite and that the Levites were taking the place of cultic prophets, stands 2 Chr.34. Here, in the introduction to the story of Josiah's reform, we find a distinct alteration from 'prophets' (2 Kgs.23:2) to 'Levites' (2 Chr.34:30).<sup>1</sup> From this it does seem plausible that for the Chronicler the Levitical singer was the successor of the cultic prophet, if the latter can be shown to have existed. Nonetheless, strong evidence for their existence cannot be found in 1 and 2 Chr. The passages referred to merely give some support for the hypothesis of cultic prophecy in that they link the prophetic gift with the cult.

There are two points in Johnson's treatment, however, which should be noticed and which are important with regard to the passages in Jeremiah and the Psalms. Firstly, if there ever were cultic prophets, their function was to secure  $\square 17\psi$ .<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the existence of such prophets allows us to draw no immediate conclusions about the relationship between them and the canonical prophets.<sup>3</sup>

1. See Johnson, CPAI, pp.71f.

2. Ibid., p.75 etc.

3. Ibid., p.3, note 1, p.75, note 1.

b) Jeremiah

In looking at the material in Jeremiah which sheds light on the prophet's relation to the cult, it is important to recognise at the outset that there are two distinct questions. Firstly, what evidence is there in Jeremiah for the existence of prophets who were attached, officially or unofficially, to the Temple and its personnel? Secondly, what evidence is there that Jeremiah had a cultic position or performed cultic functions? It may be that Jeremiah and the other prophets referred to in the book have their position and functions, cultic or otherwise, in common; but, it is likely that differences did exist between them. Indeed, it is part of the investigation to enquire exactly who were the 'false' prophets whom Jeremiah attacked and what was his relationship to them. Firstly, then, what evidence can be found to suggest that there were prophets in Jeremiah's time who were attached to the cult? There are three passages which Johnson regards as providing overwhelming evidence of prophets who formed a vital part of the cultic personnel:- Jer.23:11; 29:26; 35:4.

Jer. 23:11

This verse comes in a collection of sayings concerning the prophets,  $\square' \times' 117$  (vv.9-40). These prophets whom Jeremiah condemns were, according to Johnson, popularly recognised as indeed standing in the inner council of Yahweh and being made acquainted with his secret purposes (23:21f.), and, he says, the question inevitably arises as to 'what exactly was the status of these professional intermediaries

between Yahweh and His people'.<sup>1</sup> Johnson's very formulation of the question shows that he is taking as proven his contention that the prophets, like the priests, had the function of calling on the name of Yahweh, as professional intercessors (e.g. Jer.27:18).<sup>2</sup>

On the actual verse, which he mentions as irrefutable evidence of a prophetic cultic office, Johnson says very little, simply that the phrase בְּתוֹךְ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ יִשְׁמְעוּ indicates that the prophets had special quarters, but not necessarily a permanent residence, within the Temple itself.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it is hard to see what else could be said. Lindblom cites 23:11 as part of the evidence that 'prophets were closely associated with the sanctuaries, as ordinary members of the cultic staff', but, he points out, this only raises and does not answer the question of whether any of the canonical prophets were cultic prophets in the strict sense of being permanently attached to a sanctuary and receiving their livelihood there.<sup>4</sup> John Bright, however, draws no such inference from the verse and regards it as just part of the collection of sayings concerning the prophets with whom Jeremiah was inevitably at odds.<sup>5</sup> This section provides us, he thinks, with the classic expression of Jeremiah's hostility to these prophets who, in his view, were false

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1. Johnson, CPAI, p.58.

2. This contention will be explored in detail below, with special reference to intercession in Jeremiah.

3. Johnson, CPAI, p.62.

4. Lindblom PAI, p.207. It must be admitted that Johnson himself does not argue that the canonical prophets had such an office.

5. Bright, Jeremiah, p.154.



prophets. It is significant that Bright regards vv.9-12 as the least relevant to the subject of prophets. They are mentioned, he argues, only in so far as it is indicated (v.11) that they, like the priests, share in the moral corruption to be observed everywhere. On this view, these prophets are the 'false' prophets set over against Jeremiah, but Bright does not suggest that these are cultic prophets.

#### Jer.29:26

This verse is of far greater importance, so far as the relation of the prophets to the Jerusalem cult is concerned, and it has a bearing on the position of Jeremiah himself. Zephaniah, the priest, has been appointed as overseer,  $\tau'p\eta$ , in the Temple and he is involved in an incident growing out of a letter sent by Jeremiah (29:1-23) to the exiles, charging them to disregard the wild promises of the prophets and settle down for a long stay, pursuing a normal life as peaceable subjects of Babylon and even praying to Yahweh for the country's welfare (vv.4-9). Vv.24-32 gives an account of this incident. One of the exiles, a prophet named Shemaiah, took exception to what Jeremiah had said and wrote to the ecclesiastical authorities in Jerusalem, demanding that he be disciplined and silenced. The letter was read to Jeremiah who then replied with an oracle from Yahweh describing Shemaiah as a false prophet and announcing that his line would die out in Israel.

The text of the passage is in some confusion. As Bright analyses it, in his commentary, there is an introduction (v.24), in which Jeremiah is addressed by Yahweh in

the second person; an oracle directed against Shemaiah is begun (v.25), but then interrupted and never resumed. In v.30 we have a new introduction with Jeremiah now referred to in the third person, followed by an oracle concerning Shemaiah (vv.31f.), who is also spoken of in the third person.<sup>1</sup> Peake's view of the passage is in all essentials the same: the main confusion arises, he says, from the fact that the oracle against Shemaiah is interrupted because the author goes on to assign the reason for it, namely that Shemaiah has sent letters to Jerusalem. Then he quotes his letter to Zephaniah at length, and concludes with the statement that Zephaniah read the letter to Jeremiah. Peake suggests that we reconstruct by striking out the command to Jeremiah that he should speak thus to Shemaiah, and then treat לְאִלֹּהִים שְׁמַעְיָהוּ as the title of the paragraph and begin the narrative, 'This man sent letters in his own name...'.<sup>2</sup>

Of Shemaiah we know nothing beyond what we learn from this passage. Zephaniah is said in 52:24 and 2 Kgs.25:18 to have been 'the second priest', i.e., second to Seraiah, the chief priest. It is noteworthy that he was twice sent by Zedekiah to Jeremiah to ask for an oracle (21:1; 37:3) and the outcome of the present incident also indicates his sympathy with Jeremiah. We read in 2 Kgs.11:18 that Jehoiada 'appointed officers over the house of Yahweh'. It seems that the function of these officers would be to preserve

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1. Ibid., p.212.

2. Peake, Jeremiah, II, pp.64f.

order and prevent the services from being disturbed by 'noisy people who took themselves to be prophets', as Peake puts it. Pashhur, Zephaniah's predecessor, had exercised his disciplinary function in Jeremiah's case, having formed the same estimate of him as Shemaiah did now (20:1ff.). The plural,  $\text{Q'TPQ}$  is difficult. Some think that it refers to Jehoiada and Zephaniah. Some interpret, 'Yahweh hath made thee priest, that officers may be in the house of Yahweh', i.e., Zephaniah's position as priest carries with it the duty of appointing Temple officers. It is easier to follow the LXX, Syriac and Vulg. in substituting the singular. There is some disagreement over the implications of  $\text{XLLTNTL YLWN W'X}$ , which is literally, 'any man who is crazy and prophesying'. Bright takes this to mean, 'any crazy ecstatic' and comments that prophetic behaviour no doubt frequently fell over into wild raving that had to be curbed.<sup>1</sup> In this he follows Peake who says that there are probably not two classes referred to here: the mad and those who pose as prophet. Rather the two clauses refer to the same person, that is, anyone whose madness takes the form of making himself out to be a prophet. Peake reminds us that the early prophets had been distinguished by their eccentricities and their raving enthusiasm (e.g. 2 Kgs.9:11). This certainly suggests that in Shemaiah's view at least, Jeremiah is no different from the earlier type of prophet. We learn (v.31) that Shemaiah himself 'prophesied' and it is quite probable that he, like Hananiah, should

1. Bright, op.cit., p.210.

belong to the ranks of Jeremiah's prophetic antagonists.<sup>1</sup> As Hyatt warns, the use of the phrase, 'every madman who prophesies' cannot be taken to prove that Jeremiah was an ecstatic prophet. The nature of his message alone was enough to make his opponents consider him as mad.<sup>2</sup>

von Rad suggests that the reference is probably to prophetic bands present at the sanctuaries during festivals, who sometimes made such a nuisance of themselves to the priests that special means of supervising them had to be set up. He adds that this does not answer the question, 'were the prophets members of the cultic personnel in the narrow sense of the term, that is, as its authorised spokesmen?'.<sup>3</sup> Johnson himself argues that  $\text{אללללל}$  is used here as a simple parallel to  $\text{אלו}$  and has no immediate concern with prophets of any kind. He remarks that Jer.29:26 is not necessarily saying that the prophets were subject to the discipline of the superintendent priest, but that the priest was there to keep a check on any wild behaviour, not necessarily from prophets. It is, therefore, not to be assumed either from this passage or from Amos 7:10ff. and Jer.20:1ff. that the prophets held a subordinate position in the cultus. In fact, he asserts, the reverse is more likely, for the prophet's knowledge of God was more direct.<sup>4</sup> He refers to Jer.5:31, where the prophets are said to prophesy falsely and the priests to

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1. Peake, Jeremiah, II, p.66.

2. Hyatt, 'Jeremiah', in Interpreter's Bible, p.1021.

3. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.51.

4. Johnson, CPAI, pp.62f.

rule עַל־דִּיהֶם, at their direction. He finds support for this rendering from Jer.33:13 and 1 Chr.25:2,3,6, where the Temple choirs are performing 'under the direction' (עַל־דִּי) of their conductor. He omits to mention, however, that there is widespread disagreement over the proper way to describe the priests' activity in 5:30f. Much ambiguity resides in the verb יָרָךְ (tread, rule). Some (e.g. Duhm, Hyatt) take it as from the second root יָרָךְ and render 'they scrape into their own hands'. Rudolph emends to a form of the hiph'il of יָרָךְ (teach) and then עַל־דִּיהֶם becomes, 'at their own fist', meaning by their own authority, as often in Chr. Rudolph disagrees with Johnson here in his taking עַל־דִּיהֶם as referring back to the prophets.<sup>1</sup> It could also be asked, why, if אֲנִינִי has no immediate connection with prophets of any kind, does Johnson deduce that prophets are involved here at all? Johnson does not, in fact, make plain why he thinks this passage is relevant to the discussion. It can hardly be claimed that Shemaiah's view of Jeremiah was undoubtedly the correct one, nor that Jeremiah's being censured by the overseer (ch.20) proves that he was one of the 'noisy people', for whom supervision had been specially set up. As Wheeler Robinson says, Jer.29:26<sup>2</sup> suggests opposition rather than organised incorporation. Zephaniah is being summoned by Shemaiah to do his official duty against Jeremiah. But if the prophets were underlings of the priests, they

1. Rudolph, Jeremia, pp.34f.

2. Regarded by Mowinckel as unquestionable proof that the Temple-prophets were a recognised institution, Ps.St, III, pp.17,22.



could be dismissed when disobedient to their master. Who, he asks, can imagine Jeremiah in the role of a Temple-prophet? No doubt there were contemporary prophets who sided with the priests, but this does not make them into officials of the cult.<sup>1</sup>

Jer. 35:4

Johnson finds here support for his view that the prophets had special quarters within the Temple itself, for it is said that when Jeremiah sought to put the Rechabites to the test, he took them to the Temple, 'to the room belonging to the sons of Hanan ben Igdaliah, the man of God' ( אל- לשכת בני חנן בן - יגדל'הו איש ה'אלהים ).

Since, 'man of God' can be a synonym for 'prophet' and since in the Elijah and Elisha cycles we hear of 'sons of the prophets', Johnson regards these 'sons' of Hanan as a particular school or guild of prophets forming part of the Temple personnel.<sup>2</sup> Bright agrees that if Hanan was a prophet or a cult functionary of some sort, 'sons' may have the sense of 'disciples'. He also says that the fact that he lent his room to Jeremiah indicates a measure of sympathy with him. It is notable, however, that Bright does not regard it as certain that Hanan was a prophet, let alone a cult functionary.<sup>3</sup> Peake definitely does not regard it as certain that 'man of God' always means 'prophet' and argues that Hanan's 'sons' may have been literally such.<sup>4</sup> It is

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1. Wheeler Robinson, op.cit., p.224.

2. Johnson, CPAI, p.62.

3. Bright, op.cit., p.189.

4. Peake, Jeremiah, II, p.147.

undoubtedly true that the term is applied to people who are prophets and it is also used loosely.<sup>1</sup> There is no convincing evidence whether or not in this context 'man of God' means prophet, although it is possible that it does.

There are a number of other passages that deserve mention here. In Jer.27:16, the use of the possessive suffix (i.e., your prophets) is sufficient to show, says Johnson, that the status of the prophets in question was an official one. The passage also indicates, in his view, that the role of these prophets cannot have been very subordinate. Again he enters into no discussion of the possibility of there being different groups of prophets, some of which may not be referred to in any of these passages, even if it be proved that the passages do give irrefutable evidence for some connection of prophets with the cult. Rather, he writes, 'All in all, therefore, the evidence for the cultic role of the prophets during the monarchical period, particularly so far as the Jerusalem Temple is concerned, may be regarded as sufficiently conclusive'.<sup>2</sup>

Not everyone, however, finds this to be so. Whilst there are some who regard the references in 6:13; 8:10; 14:14 etc.<sup>3</sup> as being to 'definite groups fulfilling specified functions in the cultus of the people - particularly at the temple in Jerusalem',<sup>4</sup> the issue remains keenly

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1. See the discussion of terms, ch.I, pp.14f.

2. Johnson, CPAI, p.64.

3. The passages in which priest and prophet are linked will be discussed more fully below.

4. e.g. Hyatt, op.cit., p.861.

debated. It also tends to get confused with the separate issue of whether or not Jeremiah was a cultic prophet. C.F. Whitley, for example, stating that the notion that the canonical prophets were themselves cult officials has not been without its advocates (e.g. Halдар and Engnell), cites the many passages in which the canonical prophets are condemning 'official' prophets (e.g. Isa. 28:7; Hos.4:4f.; Jer.5:31; 14:18; 23:13).<sup>1</sup> In this, he seems to be assuming with Johnson that prophets with a cultic office do exist, but he refuses to ignore the lack of evidence for canonical prophets with a similar office. As we saw with regard to Jer.29:26 and shall see again below in considering Jer.7, Johnson seems to imply that there is evidence that Jeremiah himself held a cultic office, or, at least, had strong cultic connections. We look in vain, Whitley says, in the book of Jer. for definite evidence identifying him as a member of the Temple staff. He appears in the Temple on the occasion of his address, recorded in chs. 7 and 26, but this is hardly in the capacity of a Temple official, but rather 'in obedience to the word of God which commanded him, "Stand in the gate of the Lord's house and proclaim there this word..."'. Further, he points out that the opposition which on this occasion Jeremiah experienced from the Temple officials ill accords with the view that he had much in common with them. On the contrary, we are told that the 'prophets and priests...laid hold of him, saying, "You shall die"' (26:7f.). He writes, 'The incident can only be

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1. Whitley, The Prophetic Achievement, pp.70ff.

explained on the assumption that, far from being a cultic colleague of such people, Jeremiah had little sympathy with their interest, as indeed, his words on this occasion amply testify (26:6).<sup>1</sup>

Jer. 7 & 26 provide a good example of the way in which the same passage is used by different scholars to argue opposite points of view. A.R. Johnson regards these chapters as evidence that Jeremiah was indeed appearing in the capacity of a Temple official, or, at least, this is what is implied by Johnson's using it as part of his evidence that 'the prophets, quite as much as the priests, were officially connected with the Temple cultus'.<sup>2</sup> (Johnson's argument as a whole is misleading, in that it chiefly concerns prophets other than Jeremiah and their possible association with the cult, whilst, as with Jer.29:26, some of the evidence concerns Jeremiah himself.)<sup>3</sup> With his own typical approach, Reventlow finds in ch.7 a 'temple entrance' form, containing both prophetic and priestly elements, which, he thinks, is pronounced by the prophet who stands at the entrance to the inner court. The prophet is performing here the normal liturgical function, for this is in accordance with his status.<sup>4</sup> The possibility of understanding such passages

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1. Ibid., p.72.

2. Johnson, CPAI, p.61.

3. See further, pp.176-178.

4. Reventlow, 'Gattung und Überlieferung in der "Tempelrede Jeremia", Jer.7 und 26', ZAW, 81, 1969, pp.315-352; cf. Ackroyd, 'Aspects of the Jeremiah Tradition', IJT, 20, 1971, p.9, where he says that 'the prophetic outlooks culminating here in Jeremiah, are both pro-cultic, in the sense that they are concerned with the problem of right approaches to the deity..., and anti-cultic, in the sense that they point to the invalid nature of any cult practice which contravenes certain basic requirements'.

as Jer.7 (cf. Isa.1:10-17), in which trenchant criticisms are made of the cult, as positive cultic instruction rather than anti-cultic polemic will be discussed further; but the traditional, and indeed the most natural, way of understanding Jer.7 & 26 militates against the idea that Jeremiah himself was a cultic official.

There is, however, other evidence in support of locating part at least of Jeremiah's ministry in the cult and this must now be considered. There is firstly what seems to be Jeremiah's close association with the family of Shaphan. Shaphan was secretary of state at the time of the reformation under Josiah (2 Kgs.22:8), and he it was who brought the law-book, discovered by Hilkiah the priest in the Temple, to the notice of the king, and, in turn, he was part of the delegation dispatched by the king to consult Huldah the prophetess. It is to the chamber in the Temple of Gemariah, son of the same Shaphan the secretary (Jer.36:10), that Jeremiah sends Baruch to read the scroll in 604 which indicates that Jeremiah was in some way still related to the reforming circles, represented by the family of Shaphan. Gemariah himself, it should be noted, had, like his father, a position as counsellor at court (36:12).

Further evidence of Jeremiah's close association with this reforming and influential circle is to be seen in his relation with the other two sons of Shaphan. In Jer.26:24 Ahikam ben Shaphan saved Jeremiah from the authorities who had threatened him with death after he had delivered the Temple sermon. Ahikam too had been, along with his father, a delegate to consult Huldah, and was the father of Gedaliah,



who was appointed governor to the Babylonians after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 (2 Kgs.25:22). The close sympathy between Jeremiah and the family of Shaphan is further seen in his support of Gedaliah (40:5ff.); and a third son was Elasah, whom Jeremiah sent with a letter to the exiles in Babylon sometime after 597 (29:3).<sup>1</sup>

It is further argued that the so-called Deuteronomic circles are also to be closely related to the family of Shaphan, since the latter were such prominent supporters of a reform which had as its basis part at least of Deuteronomy. Therefore, it has been suggested, 'the inescapable conclusion seems to be that Jeremiah was from the start, and continued to be, a member of the Deuteronomic circle in close contact with those who held the highest positions in the land'.<sup>2</sup> It is not possible here to enter into the complicated question of the Deuteronomic editing of Jeremiah<sup>3</sup> and of his attitude to the reform and relation to the Deuteronomic circle,<sup>4</sup> though this would clearly be vital to any comprehensive treatment of Jeremiah's position and function as a prophet. Suffice it here to attempt a brief assessment of the argument that Jeremiah's prophetic activity was intimately connected with both court and cult.

1. This summary of the references to Jeremiah's links with the family of Shaphan is taken from W. Johnstone's 'The Setting of Jeremiah's Prophetic Activity', Transactions of the GUOS, 21, 1965/66, pp.51f.
2. Ibid., p.52.
3. See, for example, ibid., p.53; and Nicholson, Preaching to the Exiles; and Berridge, Prophet, People and the Word of Yahweh, pp.58f., note 172 and the works there cited.
4. See, for example, Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, pp.89-107; Rowley, Men of God, pp.158ff., who argues that Jeremiah was at first, at least, intimately connected with Josiah's reform in 621.

Jeremiah's friendship and obvious standing with the family of Shaphan are undeniable.<sup>1</sup> Whilst this indicates that Jeremiah was operating in court and cult circles, it does not prove that Jeremiah was in any way official. Since prophets were respected, feared, and consulted by kings, it is not surprising that they should be similarly important to state officials. Are we to deduce an official, cultic position for all prophets who from time to time were involved in state affairs? Admittedly, the argument is strengthened here if it can be shown that Jeremiah supported the Deuteronomic reform. But again the question remains, in what way was this support exercised? Need this have been in any official and cultic capacity? It is suggested that we have a credible picture of Jeremiah's prophetic activity in a cultic setting when we recognise that 'it was an essential part of the cult for as long as the reform period lasted to have a prophet of doom associated with it.... Jeremiah from the first announced doom, and this was thoroughly in line with the either/or choice presented by the law-book'.<sup>2</sup>

The juxtaposition of doom and hope, curse and blessing in the cult needs to be examined before this argument for Jeremiah's having a cultic office can be evaluated.<sup>3</sup> The argument involves, however, one major difficulty. Some of the main textual evidence cited as showing that there were in Jeremiah's time prophets associated with the cult is

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1. This, it may be remarked, provides a reasonable explanation for Jeremiah's loss of influence following the death of Josiah, when there was an abrupt change of policy under Jehoiakim. So Johnstone, *op.cit.*, p.55.
  2. So Johnstone, *op.cit.*, p.54.
  3. See below, pp.235ff. etc., and ch.IV, pp.324ff., 339ff., 357ff.

concerned not with Jeremiah but with his prophetic opponents, the so-called 'false' prophets whom he links with the priests (e.g., 23:11). Further, one of his chief criticisms of them is that they prophesy unfailing  $\square 17\psi$  and, moreover, this is precisely the function which Johnson ascribes to his cultic prophets.<sup>1</sup> It could, of course, be argued that Jeremiah was, in fact, protesting against the abuse of a prophetic cultic office whereby the  $\square 17\psi$  which was being proclaimed was out of touch with the religious and political realities of the day, but then one needs to redefine what was essentially cultic about these 'cultic' prophets. What was their peculiar task, if it was not that of securing  $\square 17\psi$  for Israel?<sup>2</sup>

Attention must now be directed to another set of passages which are appealed to as indicating the existence of prophets who had official cultic functions within a cultic setting,<sup>3</sup> but which also support the contention that if such prophets existed Jeremiah could not himself have been one of them. These are the passages in which priest and prophet are found coupled together:- 2:26f.; 8:1; 13:13; 32:32 and possibly also 4:9ff. and 14:18. There is debate about the meaning of the verse already mentioned, viz. 23:11, and of 6:13ff. (//8:10ff.) (cf. also Hos.4:4f.; Isa.28:7; Lam.4:13; Ezek.

1. Johnson, CPAI, pp.66f.,75.

2. Johnson himself says that 'it remains to be seen whether or not such apparent promises of "Peace!" were ever given under the recognition that they were morally conditioned', (ibid., p.49) and that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were against these 'professional' prophets (ibid., p.66).

3. Ibid., pp.60f., 64f.

7:26f; Zeph.3:3f.).<sup>1</sup> This brings us into an area which is clearly of great importance in this discussion, that of the relationship between priest and prophet in Israel.

This relationship has recently been much explored. The commonplace division between the prophets as exponents of a non-cultic piety and the priests as concerned with the cult, sometimes with a disregard for the ethical, has been abandoned. The reactionary movement has been to associate the prophets so closely with the cultic realm that the distinctions between priest and prophet have been blurred and with them the distinction between 'types' of prophet. If, as is most clearly recognisable in Jeremiah, there is a proximity between priest and prophet, wherein do the similarities lie?

It is at once striking that these references in which priest and prophet are linked occur, for the most part, in the prophet's polemic. Prophet and priest are both coming under attack.<sup>2</sup> The question which arises concerns whether it is a particular sort of prophet which is here condemned, i.e., a prophet bound to the cult, or whether the condemnation is of the particular people by whom the priestly and prophetic tasks are undertaken and the ways in which they have failed. O. Plöger discusses this question by examining the similarities and differences between the prophet and the priest in the realms of function, inspiration, and status and authority, and this line of enquiry will be followed here.

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1. For some discussion of these passages and for bibliography, see Plöger, 'Priester und Prophet', ZAW, 63, 1951, pp.159ff.

2. cf. *ibid.*

Some little space will be devoted to this, since it is important not only for determining whether or not cultic prophets existed in Jeremiah's time and what relation he bore to them, but also with reference to subsequent discussion of the evidence for cultic prophecy in the Psalter.

Firstly then, what are the priestly functions and to what degree do priestly and prophetic functions overlap? In his History of OT Priesthood, Cody writes, 'A kōhēn was essentially the attendant of a sanctuary with the objects contained therein: the oracular work characteristic of the early period was done with the ephod kept in his sanctuary. His raison d'être was service at a sanctuary, and his principal work was, until very late in Israel's history, the giving of oracular responses or, later, the giving of tōrâ'.<sup>1</sup> This summary raises a number of significant points: that the functions of the priesthood changed and developed during the course of time,<sup>2</sup> that the two major priestly functions were sacrifice and the giving of oracles, and that this latter function was in some way related to the giving of  $\eta\eta\eta\eta$ . So de Vaux, for instance, says that the rôle of the priest in sacrifice was very ancient, but that as time went on, 'this part of their work came more to the fore, for people ceased to ask them for oracles and others came to share with them the rôle of teaching. Conversely the offering of sacrifice was reserved to them more and more until it became the essential function of the priesthood'.<sup>3</sup> That the priests

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1. Cody, op.cit., p.101.

2. cf. G.B. Gray, Sacrifice in the OT, p.181, 'The long history of the Jewish priesthood was one of changing functions and constitution'.

3. de Vaux, op.cit., p.356. Contrast Wellhausen's statement, 'Not because they sacrifice but because they teach do the priests appear as pillars of the religious order of things', Prolegomena to the History of Israel, p.396.



had a teaching function at all, however, is disputed and what is meant by oracle and by  $\Pi \Gamma \Delta \Sigma$  must here be considered.

The narratives in the Books of Jgs. and Sam. regularly present the priests giving an oracle on the basis of some manipulative technique and in response to a military enquiry (e.g. Jgs.1:1f.; 18:5f.; 20:18; 1 Sam.14:37; 22:10; 23:2; 2 Sam.2:1; 5:23). The manipulative techniques involved Urim (e.g. Num.27:21; 1 Sam.28:6) and/or ephod (e.g. 1 Sam. 30:1-8). The character of these objects and techniques has been widely discussed,<sup>1</sup> but two fundamental features seem to have been the possibility of an indeterminate response (e.g. 1 Sam.14:37; 28:6), and of a choice from among numerous options (e.g. Jgs.1:1f.). The word of encouragement, which seems to be an integral part of the oracle, could be a statement of what Yahweh is about to do (e.g. Jgs.20:28), a declaration of his favour (Jgs.18:6), or an affirmation of the certainty of success framed in the prophetic perfect (e.g. Jgs.1:2).

It is important to realise that there is not necessarily an historical link between the oracle and what was subsequently priestly  $\Pi \Gamma \Delta \Sigma$ .<sup>2</sup> From his enquiry into priestly instruction Budd concludes that the priestly technical oracle is 'essentially a word for an immediate and individual situation; in no sense does it embody principles of permanent validity applicable to later situations or capable of re-interpretation. From the historical point of view

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1. For discussion with bibliography, see Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, pp.66ff.

2. See Budd, 'Priestly Instruction in pre-exilic Israel', VT, 23, 1973, p.2.

the Oracle gives way, not to tôrâh, but to prophecy'. He contends that this process is apparent within the Samuel-Kings history itself, where the kind of question normally referred to the Oracle is brought increasingly to the prophet (see e.g., 1 Sam.22:5; 28:7; 1 Kgs.22:5f.; 2 Kgs. 3:11).<sup>1</sup> Having shown this significant overlap in priestly and prophetic functions, however, Budd fails to consider any possible distinction between the respective methods and inspiration. He tentatively suggests, however, that the conjectural Heilsorakel represents a development from this priestly oracle in a new situation,<sup>2</sup> and this possibility must be born in mind later when considering the oracular elements in the Psalms. That the technical oracle is originally a priestly function should not be forgotten.

The other categories in Budd's examination of priestly instruction are 'priestly direction', 'priestly verdict', and 'priestly proclamation'. His views of the last form of instruction, which he considers to be לִּנְדָּבָה, pertain particularly to the concept of 'law-speaker', and so mention of these will be reserved till later in the chapter. Priestly direction he believes to reside in the priest's responsibility for right distinctions between 'holy' and 'common', 'clean' and 'unclean' (e.g. Lev.10:10f.; Ezek.22:26; 45:23), which

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1. Ibid., p.3.

2. He refers to Begrich, 'Das priesterliche Heilsorakel', ZAW, 52, 1934, pp.81ff., and Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, II, pp.53ff., where the essential elements of the Heilsorakel are said to be:-

i) a word of assurance forbidding fear.

ii) a statement that Yahweh has heard the prayer of the suppliant.

iii) a word promising help and salvation, possibly with some corroborative affirmation, e.g., 'I am your redeemer'.

operated in fairly well-defined areas such as holy war (e.g. 1 Sam.21:6), sexual relations (Ex.19:15), food, illness and death. This function belongs, he thinks, to many situations, but notably to the sanctuary.<sup>1</sup> The priestly verdict is, in his opinion, like the oracle in being a word of God for a particular situation, in this instance the difficult case requiring a divine pronouncement of guilt or innocence (e.g. Ex.22:6ff.).<sup>2</sup> He concludes by saying that 'these investigations point to a priestly ministry of the divine word and will in very distinct situations'.<sup>3</sup>

These distinctions between  $\text{הָלַל}$  and other forms of priestly instruction are not generally maintained, however, and the possible conclusions concerning the 'teaching function' of the priests and that of the prophets are diverse. Cody, for instance, contends that priestly  $\text{הָלַל}$ , whether or not it was a development from the primitive oracular consultation, was originally 'instruction between what was right and what was wrong, what to be done and what not to be done, in the narrow field of worship, ritual and observance of the Sabbath'. 'Yet', he continues, 'it did not always remain so'. It came to be concerned with a wider area of morality than that of cult and ritual (see Hos.4:6). It is, because of the various chronological levels, no easy matter to determine the meaning of  $\text{הָלַל}$  in particular contexts (e.g. Jer.2:8) and to sort out the various relations between the  $\text{הָלַל}$  given by the priests, by the prophets, by lawmakers,

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1. Budd, op.cit., pp.4-7.

2. Ibid., pp.11ff.

3. Ibid., p.14.

and by sages.<sup>1</sup> He maintains, however, that a properly doctrinal teaching function in Israel belonged not to the priest but to the wise man. For 'the oracular consultation of a primitive Hebrew priest can hardly be called a teaching function at all. The tôrâ-giving of a later period is indeed a teaching function, but it consists of little more profound than handing down statements on the conformity or non-conformity of a given course of action with a given norm'.<sup>2</sup>

As already indicated, there are, on the other hand, scholars who stress that teaching was the most continuous and recognised of the priests' functions,<sup>3</sup> and the question then arises as to the difference between priestly and prophetic functions here, especially when the wider sense is allowed for לְלַמֵּן .

Östborn, for instance, understands לְלַמֵּן as a comprehensive term, which he is then concerned to define. He writes, 'The priestly tôrâ may...be severally defined as "oracular tôrâ", as "instruction", and as "law"'.<sup>4</sup> 'Oracular tôrâ' he conceives to be directive, of the kind given, e.g., in Dt.11:30. It is often, though not always, based on or consists of concrete signs, omina (pp.91,169). 'Instruction', he says, seems mainly to have dealt with provisions of the kind incorporated with the 'law' of Yahweh (see Lev.10:11). It concerns the distinction between the holy and the unclean,

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1. Cody, op.cit., pp.116f.

2. Ibid., pp.118f.

3. e.g. G.B. Gray, op.cit., pp.223f.; and Eichrodt, Theology of the OT, II, p.395.

4. Östborn, Tôrâ in the OT, p.90.

and is bound up with cult and ritual.<sup>1</sup> He thinks that no sharp distinction can be made between direction and instruction though he adds, 'Where it designates a more or less impromptu utterance, the best rendering for  $\text{לָּוִי}$  would seem to be "direction", while "instruction" is more suitable for a more elaborate communication' (pp.34f., cf. pp.169f.). Tōrā, however, is not limited to questions of cult and ritual but concerns Yahweh's 'law' in general (p.170). He argues that there is a clear link between 'the legal utterances required in administering the law, on the one hand, and sacerdotal instruction on the other' (pp.101f.). The priest is, in his view, the true imparter of  $\text{לָּוִי}$  (p.89). He rejects the notion that in this the priest and the prophet have a common function. It is essentially a priestly function and when the prophet exercises it, it is in the priest's stead (pp.127f.). The prophets clearly regard the priests as the real custodians of  $\text{לָּוִי}$ ; hence their criticism of the priests when they neglect or distort it (pp.107-110). The  $\text{לָּוִי}$  imparted by the priests and by the prophets, when the priests fail, is the same  $\text{לָּוִי}$ . There may be differences in their attitudes to it and as regards 'their mode of imparting tōrā';<sup>2</sup> but no distinction can be pressed between cultic-priestly  $\text{לָּוִי}$  and ethical-prophetic  $\text{לָּוִי}$ , since the priests also give ethical instruction (p.147).

de Vaux, for his part, pleads for a distinction between

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1. Ibid., pp.97f. This, of course, is what Budd takes as constituting 'priestly direction'.
  2. Ibid., p.128. For the view that tōrā was the priest's task and that prophetic proclamation of tōrā is an imitation of priestly style, see Gunkel, Einleitung in die Psalmen, pp.328,374.



the priestly  $\text{לֵוִי}$  and the prophetic  $\text{נָבִיא}$ . He says that in the spheres of morality and religion the prophets played the same part as the priests but in a different way. 'A prophet was a man of the dabar, of the word, a spokesman of God, therefore, who was directly inspired by God to give a particular message in definite circumstances; he was an instrument through whom God actually revealed himself. The priest, on the other hand, was the man of the tôrâh; knowledge (da'ath), was entrusted to him for interpretation and though this knowledge certainly came from God long ago, it was handed down to men, century after century by teaching and practice'.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Eichrodt argues that  $\text{לֵוִי}$  and  $\text{בְּרִית}$ , which were the priests' concern, came to mean the socio-ethical and ritual requirements in a wider sense and that it cannot be assumed that the priestly attitude was concerned simply with 'outward observance of prescribed ordinances, with no demand either for personal surrender or for interior assent to the outward performance'.<sup>2</sup> Eichrodt also, therefore, is required to ascertain the difference between priestly and prophetic thinking here.<sup>3</sup> The really profound distinction is to be found, he says, in the fact that 'the moral teaching of the priest is concerned to guide an actually existent people into a particular pattern of life in which the eternal will of God for men is to be given visible form. This means that the status of morality is

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1. de Vaux, op.cit., pp.354f.

2. Eichrodt, op.cit., pp.395,415.

3. Ibid., p.416.

described within the limits imposed by an earthly community, that is to say, it is presented in the form of law'. The prophetic view, on the other hand, 'revolves round the attitude adopted toward the new reality of God which at this moment is endangering the very existence of the nation'. This entails a judgement so radical that it does not even stop at the laws which govern the people of God.<sup>1</sup>

Plöger's approach to the priestly-prophetic relationship raises these and other points which are interesting and which, significantly, move the discussion into the realm of office and vocation. He is reluctant to establish a distinction between the priestly  $\text{הנהיג}$  and the prophetic  $\text{נביא}$  (see, e.g. Isa.1:10).<sup>2</sup> He feels that they are both ways of representing God and his presence, and that the real distinction lies in the different natures and bases of this representation. The priestly direction is, he says, the direct proclamation of the divine will in that it presupposes a certain revelation in which the divine has been set before men in the cultic realm and this presupposition is what makes possible the interchange of human question and divine answer. In this sphere, the priest operates in the strength of his office. Without this office, his guidance is unthinkable. The prophetic word, on the other hand, is the spiritual gift of the charismatic, independent of men because it is directly

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1. Ibid., p.418.

2. Plöger, op.cit., p.179. See also Johnson, CPAI, p.7, where he says that  $\text{הנהיג}$  or 'direction' was particularly in matters of ceremonial observance and thus came to be the mark of the priestly office and yet (note 5) it was not restricted to the work of priest: it is also used with reference to a) the work of the prophet or seer (e.g. 2 Kgs. 17:13; Isa.1:10; 8:16ff.; 30:8ff.; Jer.26:4ff.; Zech.7:12) and b) the work of the teacher of 'wisdom' (e.g. Prov.1:8).

from God; related to the cult, but not bound to it. The prophetic call does not stand on the same plane as the priestly office because it lacks the characteristic of office, namely the representative commission by another. The prophet receives a call in which the sovereign action is God's.<sup>1</sup> Plöger has earlier sought to define the relationship between the early seer and the priest and between the early seer and the later prophet, neither of which he thinks is clear. He stresses that both the seer and priest are concerned with the task of discovering the divine will by the oracle, but that it is characteristic of the priest that he belongs to officialdom (e.g. 2 Sam.8:18; 1 Kgs.12:31), whilst a similar connection does not appear to be primary with the seer.<sup>2</sup> The early seer, whom he calls the charismatic, is more closely linked, however, to the later prophet, and this by the common feature of a call to a new way of life.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Plöger, op.cit., pp.187f.; cf. G.B. Gray, op.cit., p.223, where he says that the difference between prophets and priests is not one between 'law' and 'word', ritual and morality, but lies rather in the manner of experience. 'The prophet spoke out of individual, direct, personal experience; the priest out of the stored wisdom and collective experience of his class'; also Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, pp.159ff. Plöger's argument that the prophet receives a commission from God and thus lacks an 'office', in the sense of an institutional, human appointment and commission, whilst the priest has such an office, resting on a formal act of commissioning has been challenged by Noth. Noth's view will be discussed shortly, but it is the contention of this thesis that this does constitute an essential difference between the prophet, or at least some prophets, and the priest; that while both prophet and priest represent God to man and man to God only the priest has an official position in Israelite society.
  2. Plöger, op.cit., p.168.
  3. Plöger, op.cit., p.169. It may be remarked, however, that the seer does, at least sometimes, belong to officialdom, for instance, at David's court (see above, ch.II, pp.65ff.). Nonetheless, the suggestion that this is not 'primary with the seer' in the same way as with the priest is valid.

This distinction Plöger now takes up again in his conclusion. The seer, he says, belonged to the priestly realm in his exercising the ancient priestly rôle of the technical oracle-giver. Otherwise he was the precursor of the later prophets,<sup>1</sup> who could not be authorised or verified by a human medium; (hence the controversy over true and false prophecy). Thus, he believes, the juxtaposition of priest and prophet is not arbitrary but springs from an essential point of understanding. It is not the juxtaposition of two offices.<sup>2</sup>

We saw in an earlier chapter that Eichrodt attempts to draw a distinction between the priests as official functionaries and the prophets as charismatic leaders,<sup>3</sup> and we saw

1. He admits that prophecy in any period does not give a uniform picture and that we have to reckon with different traditions of prophecy (p.176 etc.). Plöger is here disregarding the old distinction between the seer as one who 'sees' things and the nabi who receives his revelation in a state of ecstasy; and it may still be questioned whether the seer's oracles were technical. Plöger is not alone, however, in making a distinction between the seer as receiving his oracles by technical means (e.g. omens) and the prophet who received his oracles in a state of ecstasy. See, e.g., Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, p.155. Halдар also makes this distinction, equating the bārū and the mabbū priests with the Israelite seer and prophet, respectively (see appendix). Plöger's view also involves the difficult question of the relation of the early prophet to the canonical prophet with whom he is largely concerned. As we saw in the preceding chapters, how far the canonical prophet receives his revelation in a state of 'ecstasy' is much debated. Nonetheless, Plöger's main point here, viz., that the prophet lacked an office and could not be authorised or verified by a human medium, holds good.
2. Ibid., pp.187f.
3. Eichrodt, op.cit., p.392; cf. de Vaux, op.cit., p.357, where he suggests that the prophet was a mediator by reason of a personal charisma, because he was individually chosen by God, whilst the priest was ipso facto a mediator, as the priesthood was an institution for mediation.



that within early prophecy the distinction is, in fact, not always so clearcut.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, we find in the thought of many scholars about the relationship between priest and prophet an attempt to establish some sort of distinction between office and vocation and this must be taken up.

An important article on the subject is Martin Noth's 'Office and Vocation in the OT',<sup>2</sup> in which he argues strongly for the charismatic, non-institutional nature of the prophetic 'office'. He is not, however, simply setting the inspired, spontaneous and creative prophet against the official, conventional and institutional king and priest. For the light which it sheds on the idea of prophetic and priestly 'offices', his full argument should be outlined.

There was, he says, in the ancient Oriental world no clearly defined idea of office. Rather, at least in the OT community, there were 'special functions which were looked after continuously by individually chosen people', and 'in such cases we are entitled to speak of "office", but still without definitely fixing the concept "office"'.<sup>3</sup> He rejects the distinction between the spheres of the sacred and profane, the divine and human, and asserts that 'a separate set of laws for "worldly" institutions and offices could not have existed', as the OT recognises no order of events on earth not created by God. Having made this point, however, he goes on to argue that the 'office' of priest shows nothing of the direct intervention and

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1. See above, ch.II, p.55.

2. Noth, 'Office and Vocation in the OT', The Laws in the Pentateuch and other Essays, pp.229-249.

3. Ibid., p.229.



communication by God which could be expected in such an office, yet he stresses that it was not, therefore, regarded as an earthly institution. He emphasises also that the more ancient OT tradition never once recognises a special act in the conferring of the priestly office.<sup>1</sup> He then gives some discussion of the practice of anointing, which, he claims, is taken over from pre-Israelite Syria and Palestine, and first confined to the king in Israel, and later extended to the High Priest and eventually to all priests. However, he says, an equally important aspect of kingship in Israel was the direct calling of each particular king, and so 'in Israel the ideas of office and divine calling stand from the very beginning unharmonised, side by side'. Thus Saul, although made king at the desire of the tribes (1 Sam.11), had also the spirit of God come upon him and 'the end of the rule of Saul was sealed by the fact that this "spirit" was taken away from him' (1 Sam.16:14)(p.240). Similarly, Jeroboam was 'personally called through the mouth of the prophet Ahijah' (1 Kgs.11:29ff.; cf. 1 Kgs.16:1-14; 2 Kgs.9:1ff.). In this way, what Noth calls 'the opposites' of God's choice and Israel's appointment were never united (see Dt. 17:15 (p.241). Noth does, however, admit that a distinction between office and divine calling existed; it

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1. Ibid., pp.231ff., where he comments on the meaning of 'filling the hand', as in Jgs.17:18 (cf. also Ex.22:29; 1 Kgs.13:33; Ex.28:41; 29 passim; Lev.8:33; Num.3:3), where we have the most comprehensive information about the appointment of a priest in the OT; cf. de Vaux, op.cit., pp.346f. who, although he holds that the priesthood was essentially an office rather than a vocation, admits that, whatever the phrase originally meant or came to mean, it does not describe a rite of ordination.

was just that the Israelite would not make such a distinction.

He claims that the charismatic element in kingship came from the period of the Judges when these leaders 'were called to act, whether by a direct experience of God, or by a prophecy and they stepped into the background once more after they had carried out the deed to which they felt themselves called; for they were not bearers of office but were chosen and called to act on one single occasion'.<sup>1</sup> The institutional element, on the other hand, he believes to have been absorbed from the royal tradition of pre-Israelite Syria and Palestine.

Turning to the real charismatic, the prophet, Noth thinks that there are a few indications of a tendency towards an official status for prophets, for instance, the references to their connections with the king (e.g. 2 Sam.24:11). He also thinks that the relationship between Elijah and Elisha points to a succession which might well suggest the existence of a prophetic office, passed on from prophet to prophet (1 Kgs.19:15f.,19ff.), but he points out that, although Elijah is instructed to instal Elisha in his office of prophet, there is still the conferring of the spirit (2 Kgs. 2:1-15), which cannot take place just like any other heritage being conferred on an heir. It is dependent on the direct intervention of God. So even here it is not a simple succession of office. Also, he says, the relationship

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1. Noth thinks that the charismatic element was also imbibed from the office of 'judge' in Israel, into the field of law, op.cit., pp.242-245; cf. also Kraus, Worship in Israel, pp.106ff. and von Rad, OT Theology, I, pp.93ff., where he gives a similar discussion of the tension between office and charisma.

between Elijah and Elisha is a special case from which it is difficult to generalise.<sup>1</sup>

He then turns to the passage in Dt.18:15-22. This passage and Noth's general conclusion will be discussed in section iv) of this chapter. There is one striking feature of Noth's argument, however, which requires comment here. This is his assumption that prophecy was a homogeneous phenomenon and that if one prophet was charismatic rather than official then all prophets were such. This is not, however, the only possible view of the matter.

An important alternative to Noth's treatment of the subject is to be found in Fohrer's article, 'Priester und Prophet - Amt und Charisma'.<sup>2</sup> Fohrer clearly locates the priest and his activity in the realm of the cult. Sacrifice is, he thinks, the chief task of the priest and with this activity is linked music and song. (It should be remarked here against Johnson that on this view there is no need to posit the existence of prophets of the type found in 1 Sam. 10;19 or their successors in order to explain the musical elements in the references in I and II Chronicles.). On the question of ordination to the priesthood, Fohrer differentiates between periods, but he says that, in pre-exilic Israel, the priest came to his activity not, like an Amos or an Isaiah, through a call, but by belonging to a priestly family.<sup>3</sup> Further, he became employed in the service of a

1. Ibid., pp.246f. Noth fails to comment on the fact that it is the  $\pi\pi\tau$  and not the  $\pi\pi\pi$  which appears to be the equipment of the canonical prophets, and this fact perhaps further isolates this passage from the idea of a general prophetic, hereditary office.

2. Fohrer, 'Priester und Prophet - Amt und Charisma', Kerygma und Dogma, 17, 1971, pp.15-27.

3. It may be remarked that, although this became hereditary, it was not always so. See, e.g., Jgs.17:1ff.

particular sanctuary. There he also had the task of giving the oracle, of giving divine direction and judgement and of pronouncing blessings and curses. (Again, this militates against the notion that a prophetic figure needs to be supplied to explain these elements in the cult.) This activity, says Fohrer, can be described as 'charismatic', though, as he later insists, the priests themselves cannot be described as 'charismatics'.<sup>1</sup>

The seventh and eighth century prophets, with whom Fohrer concerns himself, were, on the other hand, a large and comprehensive group. He divides them into three categories.

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1. Ibid., pp.18-22. Fohrer himself, as we shall see, issues a caveat against the use of the term 'charismatic'. Charisma may be defined as a supernormal gift which enables one to perform a certain function, as distinct from formal authorisation, which need not convey ability to do something. Thus Fohrer in his examination of this question (as also Plöger and Noth) differentiates between charisma, as direct calling, inspiration, and power, and office, as formal position and authority (cf. the distinction between *δύναμις* and *ἐξουσία*). A charismatic person is one who has received charisma. Fohrer himself later confuses the issue, however, by speaking of 'charismatic functions' exercised by priests and cultic prophets. He then tries to establish a distinction between technical and spontaneous methods of inspiration in order to differentiate between priests and cultic prophets. Against this it may be stated a) that a charisma was surely not needed to use technical means and, therefore, the priestly functions of giving the oracle and proclaiming the divine will, if indeed inspired by technical means, are not happily described as 'charismatic' and b) that Fohrer does not feel able to establish a hard and fast division between the priests using technical means and the cultic prophets using spontaneous means of inspiration. This leaves the way open for the notion that the priests could receive and deliver not only a technical oracle, but also an oracle received by direct revelation and communicated in oracular form, which, as will be argued below, suggests that the oracular elements in the Psalms would well come from priests, not prophets.

Firstly, there were cultic prophets who were active alongside the priests or Levites in the sanctuaries. He cites as evidence of these prophets Pss.2:21; 81 etc. and sections of the prophetic books, e.g., Isa.24-27; 33; 63:7-64; Mic.7:8-20 and Nahum, Habakkuk, and Joel. Their history, he believes, begins very early, in the association of priests and prophets in the anointing of Solomon. They are to be found in Jeremiah's time and in the post-exilic period as evidenced by sections of literature from such prophets. They were part of the Temple personnel and their tasks were a) to give the divine oracle and proclaim the divine will when the spirit of Yahweh came upon them and b) to be the representatives of the people as men before God and intercessors. In this they are like the priests, who were also mediators between God and men. Secondly, there were the court prophets who, so far as they were active in royal sanctuaries, are identical with cultic prophets. They advised the king in political affairs, (e.g. 1 Kgs.22; Jer.27). Thirdly, there were the great individual prophets who, unlike the other two groups, were unprofessional. They received a special call and were prophets not as members of a guild, nor as representatives of a family or tribe, nor as officials of a sanctuary or kind, but exclusively as representatives, messengers, and heralds of their God proclaiming, 'Thus saith Yahweh'.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., pp.23f.



From Fohrer's list of the priestly and cultic prophetic functions one is inclined to doubt whether there was any difference between them.<sup>1</sup> He does, however, try to establish a distinction. The priests, he says, exercised with the professional prophets functions which could be performed only in virtue of charisma, especially when giving the oracle and proclaiming the divine will. The difference lies in that the prophets were to a great degree spontaneous and in an ecstatic condition, whilst the priests used largely technical means, e.g. oracle by lot. (This distinction between technical and inspired means recalls the contention mentioned earlier that a difference between priests and prophets rests in their inspiration and this question will re-emerge when considering cultic prophets and the Psalms.) He also links these prophets and the priests in their exercising a profession rather than occupying an office. The professional prophets had, he says, neither commission nor ordination, nor had they the experience of being called.<sup>2</sup> Only the great prophets fall outside this scheme, by their receiving a divine call.

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1. On the overlap between priestly and prophetic functions in the ancient Near East, see appendix. This further suggests that the 'prophetic' function of delivering oracles, such as those evidenced in the Psalms, could have been exercised by priests.
  2. This would seem to be a false distinction between 'profession' and 'office' and it rests on Fohrer's contention that 'office' is a term of little use in relation to the OT. As we saw in ch. II, there is more than one way of understanding what is meant by 'professional' when applied to prophets in ancient Israel, but it seems reasonable to regard it as more or less synonymous with 'official', in the sense of institutional.

There is an impression here that Fohrer is turning the usual argument for a prophetic 'office' on its head by claiming that a divine calling, such as that experienced by the canonical prophets, constitutes the office, an office which both priest and professional prophet lacked.<sup>1</sup>

Fohrer continues by saying that we must be careful when we use the concepts of 'office' and 'charisma' in connection with the OT. There is a tendency, he says, to use 'charismatic' for a series of kings, seers, and prophets. In the prophets, however, it always involves a personal understanding of God as the ultimate source of the prophetic activity. The spirit or word of God comes upon the prophet. He receives sudden inspiration and extraordinary knowledge, for instance in visions and auditions. He is the true charismatic and this is what differentiates him from the priest who has other means of inspiration. This is also what marks him off from the cultic prophet who, like the priest, is the representative of a religio-cultic profession and not a charismatic.<sup>2</sup> The concept of 'office' is of limited use, he says, in connection with priests and prophets and is best avoided.<sup>3</sup> Both exercised a function or profession. There is no mention of ordination, the anointing

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1. See below, pp.317-319, and ch.V, pp.528-584.

2. Op.cit., pp.25f. Contrast Mowinckel, see below, pp.185f. Against Fohrer's argument is the fact that the prophets in 1 Sam.10 and 1 Kgs.22 appear to have cultic connections, if not a cultic 'profession', and yet are surely to be described as charismatics.

3. Though he does not make this plain, one wonders if this use is the one pertaining to the canonical prophets, at which he hints earlier (p.25). Whether or not the use of the term 'office' is legitimate and useful, it is the task of this thesis to enquire.

of the High Priest being, in his view, a special case.

What chiefly emerges from all this is not so much the overlap between priestly and prophetic functions,<sup>1</sup> but the division between priest and professional prophet, on the one hand, and the canonical, vocational prophet on the other, and the belief that only the former type of prophet had a cultic function or office.<sup>2</sup> Now those who support the cultic prophecy theory argue that there were professional prophets whose main function was to secure  $\square \text{ } \text{ } \psi$  and this activity took place within the cult where they were official personnel.<sup>3</sup> But the reaction from the former negative estimate of the cult which set priest and prophet in complete opposition to each other to turning the canonical prophets into cultic officials far and away outruns the evidence. Indeed, if there were 'cultic' prophets in the sense just defined, which cannot be overwhelmingly demonstrated from Jeremiah, it is all the more unlikely that Jeremiah himself was a cultic prophet. This confirms, in fact, what was argued in ch.II,

1. This point is often made, e.g., see Jacob, Theology of the OT, p.254. 'The divisions between the various functions were never watertight: the affinity between prophet and priest was very close'; and Bentzen, King and Messiah, p.44, who sees the origin of the functions of the priest and prophets, and also of the king, in the idea of the 'primordial man'. Gray makes the point that there was an incomplete differentiation of functions rather than a union of offices lying behind the representation of the same person now as priest, now as prophet, op.cit., p.180.
2. cf. von Rad, OT Theology, I, p.97, who says that there were probably early prophets who were regarded as nothing less than holders of a cultic office (1 Sam.12:23), but that there were others who broke away from such ties or who never stood in them.
3. So Johnson, see above.

i.e., that it seems that we should not divide 'types' of prophecy chronologically, as though one 'type' of prophet belonged to one period and was then superseded by another, different 'type' of prophet. Different 'types' seem to have been co-existent. So here, finding evidence that in Jeremiah's time there were prophets attached to the cult is quite a different matter from demonstrating that Jeremiah was involved in the cult.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the term  $\text{נָבִי}$  is used of all prophets offers no support for Johnson's suggestion that Jeremiah and his prophetic opponents were essentially of

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1. As stated earlier, there are two distinct questions:-  
 i) were there cultic prophets, and ii) were the canonical prophets cultic prophets. The questions are, however, interrelated and easily confused. So, we noted that Johnson, in the process of examining the evidence for the existence of cultic prophets, hints that Jeremiah himself might have been such a prophet. Here, on the other hand, it is being contended that the ways in which the cultic prophets, if they existed, resembled and were at one with Jeremiah are far less obvious than those in which they differed from and were opposed to him. It is worth noting that Östborn follows Mowinckel in accepting the existence of 'temple prophets'. These he links with the priests, who are together criticised by the canonical prophets, chiefly Jeremiah, op.cit., pp.129f. One wonders why Östborn who, as we have seen, regards the proclamation of  $\text{נָבִי}$  as a priestly function, which the prophets exercised only when the priests failed, needs to suppose the existence of temple prophets at all. Indeed, his whole argument at this point is confused (see, e.g. p.136). Clearer and more sensible are Hentschke's comments, Die Stellung der vorexilischen Schriftpropheten zum Kultus. He says that, whilst the tasks of the cult personnel and the prophets overlap, their respective inspiration and dependence on tradition differ (pp.126ff.). In his discussion of priestly and prophetic functions, he argues that  $\text{נָבִי}$  comes through the prophets and that the priestly  $\text{נָבִי}$  can be valid as  $\text{נָבִי}$  only in an indirect way. It was from human initiative, unlike the directly inspired word uttered by the prophet (pp.169ff.). The question arises whether the attacks from the canonical prophets on prophets and priests stem from the fact that priests and prophets are opposed or from an inner tension within the temple personnel (p.133). He thinks that the early nabi lacks an office in the cult in the sense in which the priests have an office (pp.149,173f.). So far as the passages in Jeremiah are concerned, which Johnson regards as evidencing the existence of prophets as



the same 'type'<sup>1</sup> since נָבִיא became an umbrella term for all sorts of prophet. One fact which does support Johnson here, however, is that if there had been such a clear division between Jeremiah and the 'false' prophets as that between unofficial, non-cultic and official, cultic prophets, there should not have been such a problem in distinguishing the true from the 'false'.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, at the risk of oversimplifying the issue, it seems possible to say that there were real, if not always clearly definable, differences between Jeremiah and his prophetic opponents. It is hard to imagine that Jeremiah had a recognised office within the court or cult, mainly because of his untempered criticisms of both. It seems to me to be rather facile to argue that what Jeremiah was attacking was not the office of these 'false' prophets but their message,<sup>3</sup> since if the cultic office was to prophesy continuous נִבְיָא, then this false message was the essence of the office and so the whole office of the prophet is condemned as false.

What seems to be indisputable, however, and to be a gain (and this is admitted even by the ardent opponents of the view that there were prophets forming a section of the Temple

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Contd.) cultic officials, Hentschke says that if there were such prophets then it is impossible that Jeremiah was one of their number (p.162). This is surely the obvious inference from the fact that what are regarded as references to cultic prophets all occur in Jeremiah's polemic. These prophets, official or not, are criticised along with the priests.

1. Johnson, CPAI, pp.47f.

2. On the difficulty of equating 'false' prophets with official and/or cultic prophets and true prophets with unofficial and/or non-cultic prophets, see above, ch.II, pp.105ff., and below, pp.235ff.

3. e.g., Overholt, op.cit., pp.76,80 etc.



clergy<sup>1</sup>), is that we can no longer regard priest and prophet as standing in complete opposition to each other. Prophets, whether true or false, had connections with the cult and with the Temple where it was celebrated. Conversely the priests had something in common with the prophets, because 'they taught the people religion'.<sup>2</sup>

Further clarification of these connections and of the whole issue of cultic prophecy requires consideration of the third source of textual evidence, viz., the Psalms.

### c) Psalms

The question of whether or not the Israelite prophets had an official position in the cult is really a question about the function of the prophets in Israel's worship. Before the term 'cultic prophet' can be accepted or rejected, it must be given definite content. Those who have sought to give it content have, not surprisingly, turned to the Psalms for their evidence, though it should be remarked that the investigation undertaken by Mowinckel which is so significant in this regard,<sup>3</sup> had the Psalms as its immediate concern, and the consequences for the prophets emerged as a by-product of this investigation. Nonetheless, these consequences were of great importance and have since provoked strong reactions. It is the present purpose to examine the contention that there were prophets in Israel who played an important part in Israel's worship, as reflected in the Psalms,

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1. de Vaux, op.cit., p.386.

2. Ibid.

3. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III.

and who could be called official, and then to consider whether or not the prophets in question are a recognisable group in the OT.

It was the cultic interpretation of the Psalter,<sup>1</sup> as distinct from the historical and eschatological interpretations, which opened the door to speculation about the place of a prophetic cult official, for a dramatic cultic interpretation allows an obvious place for such an official. This could forever have remained speculation, however, had it not been for the discovery and discussion of certain features of the Psalms which seemed to lend credence to the idea.

It was H. Gunkel who first drew attention to the prophetic elements in the Psalter, without being able to supply a satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> Gunkel held that most of the poems in the Psalter were imitative of the types which had been used in cultic situations and that these poems were not themselves intended for cultic use but were produced in pietistic circles in which the cultic legacy became the expression of a supposedly more spiritual worship.<sup>3</sup> As part of this view was Gunkel's

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1. Inaugurated by Gunkel (see especially Einleitung in die Psalmen), and which regards many of the Psalms as having at least as their original setting some cultic situation.
  2. Ibid., pp.329-381.
  3. See Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, I, pp.29f., who accuses Gunkel of not drawing the full consequences of his own fundamental discovery about the cultic origin of the Psalms, e.g., 'The majority of extant psalms were in Gunkel's opinion no real cult psalms; they were "spiritualized" imitations of the old, now mostly lost, cultic psalm poetry.... The psalms had, so to say, to apologize for their cultic origin'.

belief that the prophetic elements in the Psalter were prophetic imitations of literary types which originated in the cult. This was particularly true of the individual laments.<sup>1</sup> Since one of the most noteworthy features in recent OT study has been an emphasis on the vital part played by the cult in OT religion and on its positive value, it is understandable that others have not been satisfied with Gunkel's position.

In 1914 G. Hölscher suggested that prophets belonged to the cultic staff of Israelite shrines. He thought that this went back to the Canaanite Baal cult, in which ecstatic prophets served beside the priests in the shrines.<sup>2</sup> This was the idea that was incorporated and developed by Mowinckel in a major move away from Gunkel's explanation. His main thesis was that the prophetic oracles in the Psalms betray the presence among the personnel of the Jerusalem sanctuary of so-called cultic prophets, who played an active part in the liturgical services and to whom we probably have to look for the actual composition of many of the Psalms. For him the prophetic elements in the Psalter were not a liturgical imitation, but an actual product of prophets participating in the cult.<sup>3</sup> His elaboration of this thesis will now be summarised.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Gunkel, 'Psalmen', RGG., IV, cols.1615f.; Einleitung, pp.175ff., 367 etc. He thinks that the Psalmists imitate the prophetic style. Thus the imitation is two-way, e.g. Einleitung, p.367.
  2. Hölscher, op.cit., pp.143 etc.
  3. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, pp.3f.
  4. As it is found in Ps.St., III, pp.1-29 and The Psalms in Israel's Worship, II, pp.53-73.

There are certain features in the style and structure of the laments which imply that a priest or some other Temple official was to announce to the worshippers Yahweh's promise of hearing his prayer.<sup>1</sup> Pss.60;75;82;110, for instance, exhibit sections in which Yahweh speaks in the first person and which anticipate divine deliverance. Such a transition from a prayer for help to an assurance of deliverance, or from a mournful plea to jubilant thanksgiving, can only be understood if we regard such passages as belonging to a particular cultic situation in which a cultic official gives the divine reply to the request.<sup>2</sup> The official on these occasions is a cultic prophet.

Thus, Mowinckel gives content to the office of the cultic prophet in that his thesis answers the inevitable question, what exactly was the function of the cultic prophet in the setting of the cult? Examining the Psalms where there is this dramatic change of tone, Mowinckel concludes that the function of the cultic prophet lay mainly in answering, in giving, on behalf of God, the reply to the prayer and of providing assurance of God's succour. Since these assurances are given in the form of oracles (which is why the question of cultic prophecy in the Psalms arose in the first place), Mowinckel argues that the explanation must be that the answers are prophetic. It may be said at the outset that if Gunkel's explanation of the existence of these prophetic elements is rejected, then Mowinckel's

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1. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.53.

2. e.g., ibid., pp.59ff. and Ps.St., III, p.3.

explanation is most attractive, and it offers a clear answer to the question of the function of the cultic prophet. It is an intercessory and creative function. The prophet is the right 'prayer man'. He both recites the prayer of lamentation on behalf of the congregation and gives the divine reply.<sup>1</sup> The 'I' of some of the Psalms then becomes the prophet as intercessor and intermediary, rather than the nation or the king as the official representative of the community. But the promises which the prophet speaks in Yahweh's name are not confined to times of lamentation. It is also possible, Mowinckel argues, that the ritual of a particular cultic festival would provide that at a certain point the prophet was to announce Yahweh's answer to the prayer.<sup>2</sup>

Whilst it is the style of these promises which is Mowinckel's main reason for concluding that the official is a prophet and not a priest,<sup>3</sup> he gives other reasons for this conclusion. He argues firstly for the original identity of priest and seer, as demonstrated particularly in the figure of Samuel. The seer-priest was not primarily sacrificer, but the custodian of the sanctuary, where he spoke the powerful word of blessing and curse. He was also appealed to for oracles. So, Mowinckel maintains, in ancient Israel the priest and the giver of oracles were the same person.<sup>4</sup>

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1. e.g., *ibid.*, pp.62f.

2. *Ibid.*, p.57.

3. See *ibid.*, p.60, and p.58, where he says that it is unlikely that they derive from the priests since they lack the style of the priestly Torah.

4. *Ibid.*, pp.53f., and Ps.St., III, p.9ff.



In Canaan, however, there were two different types of people interpreting the deity: the Temple priests and the ecstatic prophets. (Similarly, in Babylonia there were the oracle-priests, the 'seers' (barû) and the ecstatics.) As a result, there occurred in Israel a distinction between two types of revelation: the priestly and the prophetic. The priestly ministry was hereditary and technical and became primarily concerned with sacrifice, whilst the prophetic ministry continued the more 'pneumatic' aspects of the character and work of the 'old seers'.<sup>1</sup> These ecstatics are the popular nebiim, who were organised in guilds and who had from an early time close connections with the sanctuaries. Evidence of temple prophets who were the successors of these prophets is found in Jer. (e.g. 29:36) and in 1 and 2 Chr. (e.g. 1 Chr.15:22), where the Levitical singers are shown to exercise the ecstatic, prophetic gift.<sup>2</sup> The early ecstatics, the temple-singers, and the psalmists are all linked by the association between poetry, music, and inspiration.<sup>3</sup> The poet is a divinely inspired man and the nabi is a poet. There is, therefore, a bond between the psalmist and the temple prophet.<sup>4</sup> Maintaining a somewhat uneasy balance between the concepts of prophetic freedom and public office, Mowinckel argues that the prophet is not a private man, but

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1. Ibid., pp.54f. (cf. also pp.90,92) and Ps.St., III, pp.7-12. As Johnson expresses it, 'Mowinckel suggested that the cultic prophets of the psalms represented a fusion of the earlier "seers" and the so-called "ecstatics", their characteristics being those of the latter, but their cultic associations being provided by the former', 'The Prophet in Israelite Worship', Exp T, 49, 1935/6, p.312.

2. Ibid., p.56. See earlier discussion of these points, above, III i, a.

3. Ibid., pp.90f. and Ps.St., III, pp.24-29.

4. Ps.St., III, pp.25f.

the employee of the community, or society, the link between the community and God.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, the prophet in his 'priestly' task in the Temple is still a figure of free inspiration and spirit-possession. He is the bearer of the divine word through free inspiration and is distinguished in the OT from the priest, the hereditary bearer of Torah.<sup>2</sup>

It is, however, precisely this distinction between free and technical inspiration (which is vital to Mowinckel's approach so far), which Mowinckel proceeds to argue was not recognised in ancient Israel. He says that these cultic prophets had 'an official, occupational inspiration, a permanent charismatic equipment belonging to the office itself' and that 'the ancient Israelite did not feel that there was any contrast between the uncontrived oracle and the utterance of a spontaneous inspiration, and the oracle that had been won by technical means'.<sup>3</sup> Mowinckel's real point here is that the inspiration of these prophets differs from that of the canonical prophets,<sup>4</sup> but what he says makes

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1. Ibid., p.5.

2. Ibid., pp.16,19. For criticism of Mowinckel's views, particularly on the relation between prophet and priest, see Gunkel, Einleitung, pp.370-375.

3. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.57; cf. p.65, '...from the point of view of the ancient Israelite there was no essential difference between a free and a more official inspiration, and...being able to interpret a technical oracular token, or some other kind of omen, was itself considered to be an outcome of a charismatic endowment, a prophetic quality', and pp.94f., 'the professional and the personal do not exclude each other anymore than the institutional and the charismatic did, according to the Old Testament way of thinking'.

4. Ibid., p.57.

it difficult to understand why there needs to be a prophetic rather than a priestly figure here at all. This takes us to what he has to say about the spontaneity of this 'prophetic' inspiration.

It may be objected, he says, that his thesis involves a denial of the essence of genuine prophecy, that is, spontaneity, and that on his view, prophecy would be reduced to the repetition of liturgical formulas. Mowinckel's answer is that the prophecies which appear in the liturgies may well have originally been spontaneous outpourings of some prophet, that the cultic prophets did not merely recite stereotyped formulas, but experienced a rush of the spirit and formulated on the spot the response which they made in the name of the congregation.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most successful responses would be recorded and used by the less original technicians in this service.<sup>2</sup> Repetition, he stresses, in no way detracted from their value and certainly need not be regarded as hypocritical, any more than a similar charge can properly be brought against a preacher in the Christian church today, who makes use of the great utterance of Jesus about forgiveness and applies it to his hearers. He also suggests that if the Psalms were used to accompany ritual acts, they may not have been impromptu creations so much as carefully and artistically prepared liturgical texts.

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1. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, pp.6,16.

2. cf. PIW, I, p.57, where he says that it is possible that the ritual of a particular cultic festival would provide that at a certain point the prophet was to announce Yahweh's answer to the prayer. Even the substance of the answer was perhaps prescribed by the ritual.

Mowinckel's division of the cult into ritual acts and liturgy rests on his contention that an important element in the Hebrew cult is the sacramental. We tend, he says, to concentrate our attention on the sacrificial element, in which man moves towards God, but we must not forget the sacramental element, those actions and words in which God speaks to and deals with men.<sup>1</sup> He reminds us, therefore, of the importance of the spoken word which accompanies the acted elements in the cult.<sup>2</sup> So, it has been argued, many of the Psalms are liturgies connected with ritual acts of the cult.<sup>3</sup> These liturgies are not related so much to occasional acts of providence but to constantly recurring needs. They are applicable above all not to specific historical situations but to the recurring factors in the experience of the worshipping community, to the festivals and times of special joy, to periods of sickness and times of special need. 'The Psalter', writes Welch, 'is largely a collection of these cult hymns which were intended for the use of individuals or of the community, but which were originally associated with an act of the cult, one of the greater festivals, a procession to the temple, a sacrifice

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1. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, pp.1f.,6.

2. This is understanding 'liturgy' to refer to what is said and 'ritual' to refer to what is done, corresponding to the distinction between 'myth' and 'ritual' as defined by Hooke, Myth and Ritual, p.3, 'In general the spoken part of a ritual consists of a description of what is being done, it is the story which the ritual enacts. This is the sense in which the term "myth" is used in our discussion. The original myth, inseparable in the first instance from its ritual, embodies in more or less symbolic fashion, the original situation which is seasonally re-enacted in the ritual'. This distinction will be of importance when it comes to considering what exactly were the functions of Mowinckel's cultic prophets.

3. See Welch, The Psalter in Life, Worship, and History, pp.64ff.

for sin, the payment of a vow'.<sup>1</sup> The liturgies guaranteed that the offering was brought with the right intention and ensured that God's will was proclaimed and his answers to prayer communicated. His great deeds on behalf of his people had to be recapitulated. Mowinckel contends that in all this side of Israel's worship, a leading part was taken by the cultic prophets.<sup>2</sup> 'Inasmuch as the cultic role was an essential and indispensable one in the system of Israel's worship, we must in consequence think of these prophets as regular officials in the sanctuary no less than the priest. We are to think of them as present as a matter of course at public acts of worship...'.<sup>3</sup>

No attempt is being made in this outline of Mowinckel's theory to criticise Mowinckel's arguments. Indeed, this will be reserved till after an examination of some of the Psalms themselves. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that, in expressing his theory, Mowinckel himself seems to be on the defensive, as if meeting opposition. In the same way as he defended the 'spontaneity' of these oracles, he now goes on to defend their sincerity. It could be objected, he says, that it is strange that these inspired oracular answers should always be positively auspicious, considering the strong impression received of the prominent part played by threatenings of doom and punishment in canonical prophecy. Could the temple prophets always be acting in good faith?<sup>4</sup> He

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1. Ibid., p.76.

2. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.6.

3. So Porteous, 'Prophet and Priest in Israel', Exp T, 62, 1950/51, p.6.

4. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.65.



gives three answers to this objection.<sup>1</sup>

Firstly, the ancients counted on the effectual creative power of the prophetic word. 'In distress and danger or before an important enterprise, in a decisive hour in the life of the people, the prophet was therefore expected to prophesy victory and good fortune'. Mowinckel can happily maintain this because he holds that there is a distinct difference between these prophets and the canonical prophets who clearly did not always prophesy victory and good fortune, nor what was expected of them. He writes, 'Only at a later stage of development would the moral and religious consciousness of the prophet be so bound by his personal "knowledge of God" that it would be able to oppose the collective wishes and ideas of the people'. So he says, both the 'reform prophets' and the official nebiim were bona fide, but the latter's knowledge of God was at a more primitive stage.

Secondly, Mowinckel replies that the oracles are always auspicious because those which have been preserved are elaborations of the token answering 'yes'. Only if the answer were positive would it be the task of the priest or temple prophet to interpret this token in words, and only such positive answers have been handed down in the Psalms.

His third reply lies in the relation of the auspicious answers to the cultic system. This system is based, he says, on the belief in covenant and election, the belief in Yahweh's own 'faithfulness to the covenant' and his 'goodwill'. The prophet who prophesies auspiciously in this context is

1. Ibid., pp.66-73.

no more insincere than the modern clergyman who, 'by virtue of the fact that the very church has been willed by God, is authorised to announce to the sinner the "merciful forgiveness of all thy sins", "on behalf of God and my holy office"'. The Psalms, he insists, show that the cultic officials were not unaware of the nation's sin, but 'the cult is there for the very purpose of restoring and maintaining the congregation's being "right" and the "blessing" to result from it'. Public worship is always planned on the basis of the pious congregation, such as according to its own ideal it ought to be. He cites Ps.24:3-6 and Ps.15 as liturgies showing the awareness of the need for religious and moral demands. Pss. 89:29ff.; 132:12 stress, he says, the conditional nature of Yahweh's promises. They will hold only 'if the king (and the people) keep the commandments of Yahweh'. This ethical side, he urges, prepared the ground well for the later prophetic movement with its understanding that the commandments of God and the promises of God were bound up with each other. Mowinckel says that the canonical prophetic movement sprang out of the prophetic element in the cult. There is also, he argues, the influence of the 'reform prophets' on the cultic prophets, as evidenced by the admonitory words of Ps.50, 'which combines the view of the sacrificial cult held by the earlier psalmists with that of the reform prophets.....'. He adds, however, that Psalms like Ps.50 were unusual and that 'on the whole it was not that particular prophetic movement, inaugurated by Amos and his successors which put its stamp on the psalms; the prophetic element found is derived from the normal type of prophecy

within the circle of "loyal" temple prophets who actually laid the religious, intellectual and historical basis for the "prophets of judgement".<sup>1</sup> Psalms such as Ps.81, he thinks, 'confirm the belief that the "prophetic element" of the psalms on the whole belongs rather to the presuppositions of the "prophecy of judgement" than to its consequences'.

After this survey of the general line of Mowinckel's argument, attention must now be given to the way in which he works it out in relation to specific psalm passages. As stated earlier, his primary study was the text of the Psalms and his cultic prophet hypothesis was essentially an attempt to explain the elements in the psalms which have obvious affinities with the prophetic literature. The approach must be, therefore, one of examining the character of this literature with the elements which Mowinckel and others have called 'oracular' and only then of trying to draw inferences about who might have uttered these elements. There are various ways of classifying these 'oracular psalms', for instance, according to who is being addressed. Mowinckel has four main categories: 1) prophetic oracles belonging to the great festivals, in which he places those belonging to the New Year and Enthronement Festivals (Pss.132;89:20-38; 81:95 and 50;82:75;87) and those where we find a prayer liturgy with an oracle or a prayer and a lament (Pss.85;14; 12), 2) prophetic oracles in the general worship of the community, in which laments are followed by oracles (Pss. 60;108;20;21), 3) oracles addressed to the king (Pss.2;110; 72;45), and 4) oracles in cultic events concerned with individuals, in which he places individual laments and purification rites (Pss.91;12;62). Whether or not this

classification is accepted, it is appropriate to consider briefly examples from all four categories, viz. 1) Pss.50; 95;, 2) Pss.20;21;60, 3) Pss.2;72, and 4) Ps.91.

1a) Psalm 50

The question to be asked here is, in what sense does Mowinckel regard this psalm as 'prophetic'?

We have already seen that Mowinckel sees this psalm as reflecting the influence of the canonical prophets. It bears a relation to the teaching of these prophets and contains the same sort of oracular judgement.<sup>1</sup> This judgement concerns the covenant requirements of which the worshipping community is here being reminded. The psalm is not a-cultic, far less anti-cultic; but rather stresses, as does the prophetic teaching, that cultic acts are worthless unless accompanied by knowledge of and communion with God.<sup>2</sup>

The crucial verses for this interpretation are vv.8,14, and 23. What is it that is being reproofed? Mowinckel's view is that the reproof is not of the zeal of the congregation for cultic offerings (v.8).<sup>3</sup> Rather they are being reproofed because 'zeal for the cultic offerings is coupled with moral laxity and lack of discipline on the part of the congregation'. They must 'call to mind what is the real and true meaning of the offerings: they were meant to be a means of calling on God in distress, and of thanksgiving

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1. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.41.

2. Ibid., p.42 and PIW, II, pp.20-23.

3. The verse could equally well have the sense that the congregation is not being rebuked for any deficiency in their sacrificing, as Yahweh does not need them and in any case they offer plenty.

and praising him...; they were meant to express a disposition and a proper religious attitude to God.<sup>1</sup>

On this interpretation the stress is on the attitude behind the sacrifice.<sup>2</sup> There is no polemic against any kind of sacrifice as such;<sup>3</sup> nor any suggestion that the attitude alone is sufficient, that this is to be the sacrifice.<sup>4</sup>

It is significant, however, that Mowinckel does not regard this teaching as 'prophetic' in the sense of being a direct borrowing from the prophets (cf. Am.5:21f; Hos.6:6; Isa.1:10ff; Mic.6:6ff.; Jer.6:20; 7:21f.; 1 Sam.15:22.). This is chiefly because he argues for a distinction between the outlooks of the prophet and the psalmist - 'With the prophets it is the unconditional surrender to God and social morality - "the righteousness" and "the loving-kindness within the covenant" - which are ranked above sacrifice; with the psalmists it is the thanksgiving psalm and the psalm of penance and the inner disposition these are meant to express'.<sup>5</sup> There is not in the psalms, he contends, the radical condemnation of a perverted cult, such as we find

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1. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.23.

2. cf. Mowinckel's interpretation of Ps.51:19, *ibid*.

3. Contrast Snaith, Hymns of the Temple, pp.96ff., who (on v.8) holds that the Psalmist is attacking not sacrifice as such -  $\text{לֹא כִּי־לֵב־לֹא־יִשְׁלַח־לְפָנֶיךָ־אֵשׁ}$  but the idea of sacrifice as a gift by which God is enriched or satisfied -  $\text{וְעֹלֹתֶיךָ־לֵב־לֹא־יִשְׁלַח־לְפָנֶיךָ־אֵשׁ}$ . This is taking  $\text{לֵב־לֹא־יִשְׁלַח}$  as adversative and stressing the difference between the burnt offering and the  $\text{עֹלָה}$  in which the worshippers participate.

4. Whether  $\text{וְעֹלָתֶיךָ־לֵב־לֹא־יִשְׁלַח־לְפָנֶיךָ־אֵשׁ}$  (v.14) means the material sacrifice of thanksgiving or the spiritual attitude of thanksgiving is not, in fact, clear. The latter understanding is perhaps supported by the occurrence of  $\text{וְעֹלָתֶיךָ־לֵב־לֹא־יִשְׁלַח־לְפָנֶיךָ־אֵשׁ}$  in v.23.

5. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.24.



in Am.5:21ff. and Isa.1:10-15. The emphasis in the Psalms is on cultic piety.<sup>1</sup> The worth of this distinction could only be assessed by an examination of these prophetic texts, but a few points can immediately be made. Firstly, it is dangerous to assume that there is a prophetic attitude to sacrifice, which can be put alongside the attitude expressed in Psalms such as Ps.50 to judge whether or not they are 'prophetic'.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, if as Mowinckel suggests, there is to some extent a common inheritance of covenant requirements, why does he call this psalm 'prophetic' and thirdly, and related to this, if the attitude expressed in this psalm is concerned with cultic piety and in this differs in emphasis from the prophetic teaching, what is the justification for calling this a prophetic oracle?

There is, however, a second sense in which, according to Mowinckel, this psalm is 'prophetic' and this is that it contains an oracle which would be uttered by a cultic prophet. Now it must be admitted that, in both form and content, vv.5,7-23 resembles a prophetic oracle. But all that this, in fact, says, is that if this is an actual oracle then there were people in the cult who said things that a prophet might have said in a way that a prophet might have said them. As we have seen, it is certainly not inconceivable that people who were not prophets expressed this sort of sentiment. Is

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1. Ibid., and Ps.St., III, pp.44f.

2. cf. Lindblom's general point on the prophetic attitude to the cult, PAI, p.351.

it then only something which looks like a prophetic oracle uttered by someone who was not a prophet? The direct form of address, 'die alte Form der Jahwaredede',<sup>1</sup> however, remains as evidence of an oracle.<sup>2</sup> In what way it was inspired or uttered is another question. Mowinckel argues that the oracle represents not poetic fiction, but cultic reality. Behind the oracle lies the authorisation of a cult prophet as an inspired temple singer.<sup>3</sup> There is, however, a complete lack of evidence about both who said the oracle and how it was inspired. We have seen that Mowinckel is not troubled by the thought that the oracles may represent a prescribed form of words and not always be the result of immediate inspiration.<sup>4</sup> If, however, he concedes that the ecstatic gift, such as he thinks is peculiar to the prophet,<sup>5</sup> is not required when this liturgy is recited, his argument for the existence of a cultic prophet delivering this oracle here becomes very weak and rests ultimately on the hypothesis that at one time this oracle was delivered spontaneously.

#### 1b) Psalm 95

Mowinckel relates this and the parallel psalm, Ps.81, to the renewal of the covenant, within the Enthronement Festival.<sup>6</sup> The first part he regards as an enthronement

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1. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.44.

2. The form is, however, more like the legal curses in Dt.27 than the prophetic denunciations, and there the persons involved are Moses and the Levitical priests (27:14). This supports the view that the inspired temple singer need not have been a prophet.

3. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.44.

4. See above, pp.185f.

5. See above, p.185.

6. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.156.

hymn and the second as the renewal of the covenant by the king, through the mouth of an inspired cultic prophet.<sup>1</sup> He stresses that, in the second part, the oracle, the point is that Yahweh's promises to king and people will be kept if they keep the covenant.<sup>2</sup> As in his treatment of Ps.50, Mowinckel finds this sort of oracular judgement to be prophetic. He writes, 'In this cultic admonition and rebuke of the transgressions of the people lies the root of the prophetic speech of rebuke and doom. Yahweh's claim to the complete surrender of the people to him as their one and only God, and the inherent ethical approach of the Yahweh religion, resulted in picturing the just judgement of his coming as a judgement not of their demonic and historical enemies and of the sinners within Israel, but as judgement of his own people as well'.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting that Mowinckel thinks that the oracle has only the form of free inspiration and that it had, in fact, become part of regular worship.<sup>4</sup>

Mowinckel does not make clear why he thinks that the renewal of the covenant takes its impetus from the king. It

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1. Ibid., and Ps.St., III, p.39.

2. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.39.

3. Ibid., p.161. In a footnote, Mowinckel mentions that this complex of ideas has been observed and elaborated by Würthwein, 'Der Ursprung der prophetischen Gerichtsrede', ZThK, 49, pp.1ff. and that in Hesse's critical remarks against Würthwein, 'Wurzelt die prophetische Gerichtsrede in israelitischen Kult?', ZAW, 65, 1953, pp.45ff., Hesse is right in maintaining that the differences between the ordinary cultic prophets and the 'great prophets' are not to be blurred, but, he says, the first creative impulse came from the ideas of the cultic prophets. See below, pp. 232ff.

4. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.40.

would seem more natural in view of his stress on the oracular form ('die alte Form der Jahwärede') to assume that the prophet is speaking on behalf not of the king but of Yahweh. Nor is it clear why he thinks that the promises and the warnings are to both king and people. Surely here the prophetic warning is being addressed to the community. Oracles addressed to the king are, as he admits, of another type.

Nonetheless, there is strong support for Mowinckel's regarding this as an oracular psalm. There is a clear break at v.7c, which seems to introduce an appeal made by an individual to the other people taking part in worship.<sup>1</sup> There is a noticeable change in person, from 3s. suffix in v.7c to 1s. suffix in v.9, and vv.8-11 take the form of direct speech by Yahweh. There is here then something which is definitely in the form of an oracle. There is, however, nothing about who gave the oracle and in what way it was inspired. However prophetic in character this oracle may be, the fact remains that it is generalising rather than referring to a specific situation and, as Mowinckel himself implies, it could be part of a collection used regularly. As with Ps.50, Mowinckel is here not disturbed by the thought that it may not represent a spontaneous utterance by a prophet. Again, one wonders, therefore, why he needs the

1. It is possible to regard v.7c as having the same speaker as vv.1-7. So Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, p.574, who says that in v.7c the psalmist is still speaking. On either view, v.7c is an appeal and not the protasis to v.8 (as it is in LXX, Vulg., Jerome, Prayer Book, AV and RV margin). This is supported by the use of □□□ elsewhere, e.g. Dt.9:3.

hypothesis of an inspired cultic prophet to explain the existence of such oracles. His argument ultimately rests on the utterance's being oracular in form and content, which, he contends, could not come from a priest.<sup>1</sup>

2a) Psalm 20

Mowinckel describes this psalm as 'a national psalm of intercession for the King before he goes to war',<sup>2</sup> and there is general agreement that it may have formed part of the ritual during which prayer and sacrifice were offered to Yahweh for the king and his campaign.<sup>3</sup> 2 Chr.20 is interesting in this connection. It tells of the invasion of Judah by the united forces of the Ammonites, Meunites, and Moabites. When the news of this aggression reached Jehoshaphat, the king, he proclaimed a fast. During the ritual appropriate to such a day, the king offered a prayer to Yahweh before the congregation, asking for his help. Thereupon Yahweh's answer was given by Jahaziel, an Asaphite, who delivered an oracle of salvation stressing that the war was Yahweh's war. It would seem to be possible that Psalm 20 was used on a similar occasion. We are, however, given no indication of a specific occasion and Mowinckel says that its pure literary nature indicates that it was used often,<sup>4</sup> which suggests that it may have been meant for any such occasion. It is a royal psalm, in that the 'oracle' is addressed to the king. It certainly is not a liturgy of

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1. See above, pp.184-186.

2. Mowinckel, PIW, I, p.225.

3. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.73. cf. e.g., A.A. Anderson, The Psalms, p.174.

4. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.75.





It is not only the change in speaker, however, which suggests that vv.7ff. are spoken as a divine answer, but the dramatic change in tone which they mark. They express the strong assurance that the prayer for help has, in fact, been answered and that answer promises victory. A.R. Johnson says that the obvious inference seems to be that the speaker is one of the professional prophets attached to the cultus. He continues, 'Confirmation of this is to be found in the fact that the utterance bears the typically prophetic emphasis upon the futility of reliance upon human aids to war; the really potent weapon is the '"Name" of Yahweh'. Like Mowinckel, he thinks that the change of tone was based upon a typical sign or portent and that this may have been found in some kind of divination connected with the preceding or accompanying sacrifice.<sup>1</sup>

It is by no means clear, however, whether what we have here is an oracle. As we have seen Mowinckel thinks that vv.7ff. constitute not so much an actual oracle as the inference from an oracle which is unrecorded. An unrecorded oracle is his explanation of such a change in tone, in preference to a psychological explanation or Gunkel's 'certainty of a hearing'. Nor is it clear what is the actual extent of the utterance, oracle or no oracle. In vv.8f., the speaker is again plural which may suggest that it is again the congregation rather than an individual now speaking, though it could be that the plural is used simply because there is a representative person speaking on behalf of others.

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1. Johnson, in Exp T, 49, 1935/6, pp.317f.; cf. A.A. Anderson, op.cit., pp.173ff.

Against Mowinckel's conviction that behind this unrecorded oracle is a cultic prophet is the fact that we cannot be sure what sort of person spoke v.7 (8f.). Further, if he thinks that the oracle or its result is formalised and used frequently, then it could well come from the priest or even the king. That it is a prophetic rather than a priestly utterance, however, receives some support from the narrative in 1 Kgs.22 (see also 1 Sam.7:9f.; 13:9-12).

## 2b) Psalm 21

Mowinckel thinks that the clue to the point of the psalm rests in v.14, which he regards as an original part of the psalm, and as a prayer (cf. Ps.20:9) which shows that the oracle concerns a concrete situation, i.e., (like Ps.20) the king's going to war.<sup>1</sup> The first part of the psalm (vv.1-7) is a thanksgiving for the blessing of the king, but the whole cannot be regarded as a Psalm of thanksgiving,<sup>2</sup> for its main point lies not in the thanksgiving but in the oracle which follows. The thanksgiving is, he thinks, only part of the prayer-liturgy. In v.8, there is a new point being made and this concerns the trust of the king in Yahweh which is a blessing for both king and people.<sup>3</sup> This is sung by the king himself, expressing his trust. It is, he argues, common enough for the king to speak of himself using the third person (e.g. Ps.19:12,14).<sup>4</sup> Then (vv.9-13) the

1. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, pp.75f.

2. Against, e.g., Kirkpatrick, op.cit., pp.109f.

3. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.76.

4. Ibid., p.77.

prophet delivers the oracle, which in this case is the result not of oracle-technique, but of free inspiration, something like the dreams of the nabi. Finally, v.14 is a final prayer sung, as in Ps.20, by the choir.

There is no doubt about there being a break at v.8. In vv.2-7 Yahweh was addressed and here he is referred to in the third person. From v.9 onwards, someone in particular is addressed, most probably the king. Whilst the first part of the psalm concerns the blessings which the king has received, the second part speaks of the king's future triumph. It is not clear, however, whether this utterance is truly oracular in the sense of predicting the future, for it is possible to take אֶשְׂבֵּחַ etc. as jussives,<sup>1</sup> rather than as futures. These verses would then represent the expression of a wish, i.e., a prayer. Even if the verbs are to be taken as futures, there is nothing to suggest that someone specially inspired received the message at this moment and uttered it. Mowinckel offers no support for his conclusion that it is the result of free inspiration. It is by no means certain then that there is here an oracle, in the sense of a prediction or promise, and it is even less certain that behind it stood the freely inspired figure of a prophet.

2c) Psalm 60

Mowinckel's view of this psalm is that it is a liturgy<sup>2</sup>

1. So Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp.86ff.
2. In the Gunkel form-critical sense of a composition which contains different elements, in this case lament, oracle, repeated prayer, assurance of being heard, and final triumph.

containing an oracle.<sup>1</sup> The main questions here concern the extent of the oracle, and the nature of its inspiration and delivery. For instance, is v.7, which here seems to stand by itself, part of the oracle (vv.8ff.)? It is interesting that it occurs also in Ps.108, preceding the same oracle. This is surprising if it indeed stands in isolation from the oracle, for then the oracle alone would be expected to recur.<sup>2</sup> Further, is v.10 part of the oracle or is the oracle limited to vv.8 and 9?<sup>3</sup> Also, what is the relation of the oracle to the rest of the psalm?

That there is here an oracle and that it is an integral part of the psalm is indicated by the change in metre at the point at which the oracle formula occurs. Mowinckel argues that in this regard this oracle differs from that in Ps.89:20, where we find an echo of the general promise to the Davidic house (2 Sam.7:9f.).<sup>4</sup> Here there is an oracle with specific references and belonging to a specific historical situation. He admits, however, that the oracle, which in his opinion is vv.8-10, could have an independent existence and be used in a different context.<sup>5</sup> He writes,

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1. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.66.

2. Gunkel regards it as a call for an oracle. The likeliest solution is that in Ps.108 more than the oracle has been included.

3. This affects the dating of the psalm, as is discussed by Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, pp.66ff.

4. Ibid., pp.65f. Contrast Kirkpatrick, op.cit., p.341, who thinks that similarly in Ps.60 we have the great promise to David freely reproduced in a poetical form rather than an actual oracle.

5. e.g., it here occurs in a psalm of lament whilst it also occurs in a psalm of thanksgiving (Ps.108).



'From Pss.60 and 108 we can see that the same promise might reappear in different psalms, at different times. Oracles might, in other words, be used over again. This very fact shows that they made up a permanent feature of the liturgy itself, and that the wording would usually be rather stereotyped and according to pattern'. He continues, 'It would be a rare exception for the promises to be given a new wording explicitly based on the concrete historical situation by which the day of prayer was occasioned. This however is evidently the case with Ps.60, in which the answer has been formulated with reference to a definite historical situation: a war against Edom and other neighbouring peoples. But even such a promise might be used again in a new situation and with a new mode of expression, as will be seen from Ps.108'.<sup>1</sup> So Mowinckel thinks that the oracle in Ps.60 is immediate though the statement just quoted suggests that it may have been an earlier composition quoted in this context. He concedes that he is not certain whether Yahweh's answer which is here delivered represents the prophetic gift of direct reception and transmission of the word or the technical oracle. He refers, in fact, to the prophetic and the priestly oracle which would be delivered in the sanctuary.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to the remainder of the psalm, Mowinckel thinks that vv.11-13 are a renewal of the prayer, followed by a final anticipatory expression of confidence and thanksgiving

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1. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.59. Mowinckel's including v.10 as part of the oracle dates the psalm later than the time of David, when it was less conceivable that the territories referred to were subject to Israel.

2. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.69, note 1, where he explains his translation of  $\text{1} \psi \text{ } \tau \rho \text{ } \text{1}$  (v.8) as 'in his sanctuary'.

(v.14). Again, he thinks that this confidence cannot merely be explained psychologically, by saying that 'through his prayer the suppliant has now achieved confidence and assurance'. Rather the confidence is based on objective grounds, the promise of salvation by means of an oracle or a promise to that effect.<sup>1</sup>

Though he has argued a strong case for the existence of an oracle as part of this psalm, Mowinckel has offered no evidence that it represents the freely inspired word which is the prophetic experience. Rather, he himself vacillates between calling it prophetic and priestly, oracle and promise, ecstatic and technical. Again the oracular form seems to be the only suggestion of a prophetic person here, and it suggests only a possibility and is not a conclusive demonstration.

### 3a) Psalm 2

Mowinckel describes this psalm as the clearest example of the royal psalms which belonged to the anointing and enthronement festivals and which throw light on the religious ritual of the festival.<sup>2</sup> We see, he says, from the two accounts of coronations, viz. of Solomon (1 Kgs.1) and of Joash (2 Kgs.11 = 2 Chr.23), that the festival was divided into two main parts; the anointing in the sanctuary and the enthronement in the king's palace.<sup>3</sup> The main point

1. Mowinckel, PIW, I, pp.217f.

2. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, pp.78ff., and PIW, I, p.62.

3. Mowinckel, PIW, I, p.62. See also von Rad, 'The Royal Ritual in Judah', The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays, pp.223ff., where he says that Gihon, in the first narrative, was meant to indicate a sanctuary, since it clearly had sacral associations. von Rad points out, however, that in the Northern kingdom conditions were not favourable to the development of a fixed royal ceremonial and that in 1 Kgs.1 it is significant that David has to make the arrangements ad hoc, pp.222f.

of interest in this ceremony lies, for Mowinckel's thesis, in the reference, in 2 Kgs.11:12, to the  $\aleph \aleph \tau \aleph$  with which the king is invested by the priest. This, he considers, is the clue to understanding the reference to the  $\rho \pi$ , 'decree' in Ps.2:7, which, in his opinion, alludes to the same ceremony as takes place in 1 Kgs.1 and 2 Kgs.11. In his understanding of the meaning of  $\aleph \aleph \tau \aleph$  Mowinckel follows von Rad. von Rad says that  $\aleph \aleph \tau \aleph$  in 2 Kgs.11 must refer to an object which can be handed over, probably something written. According to the Egyptian ritual of enthronement, there is a written document containing the ancient titles and sovereign rites and duties conferred on the Pharaoh by the god, in brief, 'the king's authority to rule as the surrogate of the god'.<sup>1</sup> So Mowinckel argues for a written document in the Israelite enthronement ceremony, expressing the divine legitimacy of the king, his calling and enthronement by the deity, and the further destiny and 'name' which will thereby be his.<sup>2</sup> The word  $\aleph \aleph \tau \aleph$ , however, does not occur in Ps.2 and in equating it with  $\rho \pi$  in Ps.2:7, Mowinckel is again following von Rad, who says that  $\rho \pi$  here is to be understood as the royal protocol and in this passage is the direct equivalent of the  $\aleph \aleph \tau \aleph$  in 2 Kgs.11:12. It is the statement that Yahweh has adopted the king as his son.<sup>3</sup> von Rad further argues that we see from Pss.89:39; 2:7; 105:10 that  $\rho \pi$ ,  $\aleph \aleph \tau \aleph$ , and  $\aleph' \aleph \aleph$

1. von Rad, in The Problem of the Hexateuch, p.225.

2. Mowinckel, PIW, I, p.62.

3. von Rad, in The Problem of the Hexateuch, p.226.

are virtually synonymous,<sup>1</sup> and Mowinckel takes up this point in suggesting that what follows the introduction of the  $\rho\pi$  in Ps.2 is the confirmation of the covenant with David.<sup>2</sup>

We must now consider what this has to say, if anything, about the prophet's function in the cult. Mowinckel stresses the fact that in the narrative of Solomon's anointing, Nathan the prophet appears alongside Zadok the priest. From this and other references (i.e., 1 Sam.16:1ff.; 1 Kgs.19:15f.; 2 Kgs.9:6), he concludes that 'at the installation the prophet also has his place and the prophetic legends generally indicate that it is the prophet who performs the anointing'. That there is no reference to a prophetic figure and mention only of priests in 2 Kgs.11 does not trouble Mowinckel as he clings to his argument that in ancient Israel the division between priest and prophet was fluid and so here he can speak of seer-priests, priestly prophets, temple prophets, cult prophets without being too precise.<sup>3</sup> So he asserts that the legitimising oracle, the  $\rho\pi$ , proclaimed here is delivered in the anointing ceremony by the temple prophet. It is, in fact, a prophetic oracle. He writes, 'In Pss.2 and 110 and in allusions in Ps.89:20ff. such enthronement oracles have come down to us, and it is the style and content of such anointment oracles that furnish the material which the tradition used when, in the legend of Nathan, it makes Nathan pronounce such promises to David'.<sup>4</sup>

1. Ibid., pp.226ff.

2. Mowinckel, PIW, I, p.62.

3. Ibid., p.62 and Ps.St., III, pp.81ff.

4. Mowinckel, PIW, I, p.63.

Such oracles, he says, have fixed contents:- 'the king's filial relationship to Yahweh by adoption, the promise of everlasting rule for his family and the allusion to the covenant with the progenitor, as well as the promise of sovereignty over the nations and an allusion to the great "name" in store for the king'.<sup>1</sup>

The fact remains, however, that in the only explicit reference to a prophet's functioning in anointing a king (i.e., 1 Kgs.1), there is no mention of an oracle, though this does not rule out the possibility that such an oracle might have been spoken. Mowinckel himself thinks that in Ps.2:7-9, the king might be the speaker. V.7 then introduces the actual oracle with the king saying that Yahweh spoke this to him, 'through the mouth of a prophet'. That the prophetic gift is sometimes received by the king is shown, he thinks, in 2 Sam.23:1-3; 1 Kgs.3:5ff.<sup>2</sup> In this case, it is difficult to see why Mowinckel insists on the presence of a freely inspired cultic official at all.

Brief mention should be made at this point of Ps.110. Mowinckel thinks that this psalm belongs to the moment when the king is led forth to ascend his throne, and that in v.4 we have a divine oracle installing the king in the priestly office.<sup>3</sup> Mowinckel stresses that the king played an important part in the cult and that the significance of his being declared 'priest after the order of Melchizedek' lay in the fact that 'The union of royal and priestly power was

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1. Ibid.

2. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.88.

3. Ibid., pp.88ff. and PIW, I, pp.63ff.



the main characteristic of El Elyon's kings in ancient Jerusalem, whose realm David and Solomon had inherited and maintained as the foundation of their position and power.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that though the majority of exegetes would regard the speaker in the psalm as a cultic prophet, as does Mowinckel, or as a priest addressing the king, there is a suggestion that the speaker in vv.1-3 and 5-7 is Zadok the priest, whilst v.4 is addressed to Zadok by the king.<sup>2</sup>

### 3b) Psalm 72

In his treatment of this psalm, Mowinckel shows an interesting reluctance to see here a prophetic oracle, whilst at the same time he is determined to describe the psalm as 'prophetic'. The reasons which he gives for both tendencies show what Mowinckel considers to be essentially 'prophetic' and they ought, therefore, to be mentioned.

Formally, he says, the psalm appears as an expression of or a wish for blessing on the king. It begins with an intercession for the king, but from the imperative, 'give (  $\text{ן}$  ) the king', we then move over to imperfects (e.g.  $\text{ן} \text{ } \text{ן}$  v.2) and the question is whether these are to be understood as indicative, speaking about the future, or jussive in sense. It is difficult in terms of ancient Hebrew thought, he says, to decide between a desire for (which would be expressed by the jussive) and a promise of blessing, and this because of the concept of the all-powerful word. The word carries with it the power of the person who speaks it and it would be the

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1. Ibid.; cf. A.A. Anderson, op.cit., p.771.

2. So Rowley, 'Melchizedek and Zadok', Festschrift für Alfred Bertholet, pp.461ff.

prophet's task to speak effective words of blessing or cursing.<sup>1</sup> If a prophet is speaking here, he continues, then the expression of a wish for blessing becomes prophecy and to this extent Ps.72 may be regarded as a prophetic psalm. It is prophetic in that it predicts and creates the future. However, the psalm as a whole is not an intercession but rather a description of the wellbeing which will result from the fact that the king receives and possesses the divine. Further, the use of imperfects rather than prophetic perfects indicates that this psalm is probably more priestly than prophetic. Whether the former or latter is the case will depend, he thinks, in the first instance, on the psychical equipment of the one who is speaking. If the priest is speaking, in the power of his ordination, then in form, content, and character we have a word of blessing. If an ecstatic visionary is speaking, then we have a prophetic oracle.<sup>2</sup>

Mowinckel comes down in favour of its being a psalm of blessing uttered by a priest. He writes, 'The psalm becomes a formula of blessing which reminds one strongly of the promises of the prophets as it oscillates between blessing and prediction. The officiating priest who recites the psalm, to begin with speaks on behalf of the congregation and in the form of a petition. But he is also the representative of Yahweh and pronounces strong and effective words with a ring of certainty'.<sup>3</sup> What we have here is, he

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1. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, p.93.

2. Ibid., p.94.

3. Mowinckel, PIW, I, p.69.

says, not a direct oracle but the words of an inspired psalmist.<sup>1</sup>

It is not at all clear why, in view of this, Mowinckel treats it as an oracular psalm. The only real connection with other oracular psalms is that the kind of thing which is predicted here about the king is the kind of thing which a prophet would predict about the king. Thus Mowinckel stresses its ethical strain.<sup>2</sup> It is puzzling that Mowinckel uses the psalm to demonstrate the link between intercessory prayer and prophecy<sup>3</sup> and the rôle of the prophet as intercessor, when he rejects both the idea that the psalm is generally an intercession and the idea that a prophet is speaking it.

#### 4) Psalm 91

Mowinckel regards this psalm as a liturgy, in which the divine answer comes in an oracle. There is the promise of Yahweh's help in need (vv.14-16).<sup>4</sup> Both the blessing (vv.1-13) and the oracle contain the divine reply to the prayer and we have good grounds to suppose that they are spoken by one or perhaps two officiating priests.<sup>5</sup> In the oracle, the assurance is given to the worshipper less directly and through an intermediary. He is referred to in the third person.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid., II, p.62.

2. Ibid., I, p.68.

3. Ibid., II, p.63.

4. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, pp.102ff.

5. Ibid., p.103.

6. Ibid., p.104.

In this last respect, the oracle is like that in Ps.12 (v.6). In this case, Mowinckel says that the fact that the promise speaks of the worshipper in the third person shows that 'the temple prophet (priest) is supposed to be the intermediary and messenger; the deity is supposed to speak to the cultic official about the worshipper, and then the cultic official announces what the deity has said'.<sup>1</sup> One wonders why Mowinckel introduces here a temple prophet, whilst with Ps.91 he speaks unambiguously of a priest.<sup>2</sup> If Ps.91:14-16 is the sort of thing which could suitably be uttered by a priest and yet at the same time is oracular in form (not that Mowinckel makes clear in what way this is so), one is left to wonder why other oracles in the psalms could not have been uttered by priests, who are, after all, the recognised cultic officials and givers of oracles. Further, if Ps.91 contains an oracle of blessing which one would expect from a priest, why deal with it in connection with psalms which, according to the introduction to Psalmenstudien III, evidence prophetic activity in the cult? This serves to confirm the general impression given by Mowinckel's treatment of these psalms, i.e., that he uses the term 'prophetic' loosely and in a variety of senses and seems to insist that prophetic and priestly elements are both so dissimilar that the difference is significant and also so similar that the difference does not matter.

Some attempt must now be made to assess the arguments which Mowinckel offers in support of his thesis that there

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1. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.60.

2. Ibid., p.50 and Ps.St., III, p.103.

were, in the cult, official prophets operating alongside the priests. The fundamental point at issue is whether the oracular elements in the Psalter, recorded or unrecorded, are to be explained in terms of prophetic or of priestly activity. What is the style of these oracular elements? Is this more likely to be prophetic or priestly? What are the cultic functions reflected in these oracular elements? Are they more likely to be prophetic or priestly? In considering these questions, some general criticism will be made of Mowinckel's thesis as it is outlined above.

We saw that Mowinckel holds that the Temple prophet represents a fusion of the earlier seer-priest and the ecstatic nabi, in that he performs a priestly task whilst being a figure of free inspiration and spirit-possession.<sup>1</sup> Surely, this could be turned on its head, however. If, whilst remaining distinct from the priest, the prophet could perform a 'priestly' function, in that it related to the cult and its liturgy, why is it so difficult to imagine the priest using prophetic language and even performing a 'prophetic' task, in that it involved the giving of oracles, if indeed either of these categories of function can be described as priestly or prophetic? For, as we saw earlier, the giving of oracles was an important function of the priesthood.<sup>2</sup> In his attempt to show that this function is essentially prophetic, Mowinckel argues that behind these oracles is the prophetic gift of free inspiration. Yet,

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1. See above, p.185.

2. See above, pp.158ff.



when it comes to examining the actual oracular psalms, he finds very little that he is prepared to say is immediately inspired. The formalised oracles could, he admits, well be delivered by a priest, though he hangs on to the vague notion that originally such an oracle might have been due to free and spontaneous inspiration. Nor is it that what is mechanical is characteristically priestly whilst what is spontaneous is characteristically prophetic, for Mowinckel insists that the Hebrews did not differentiate between the two kinds of inspiration, and the technical oracle could well have been received by a prophet.<sup>1</sup> His most persuasive argument for the existence of cultic prophets seems to lie, however, in the idea of a spontaneous inspiration by which there appeared in the liturgy the free word. It is not unconceivable and, indeed, it is quite likely that there was in the cult a place for the prophetic element, or it is difficult to understand why the cult was so important and so acceptable.<sup>2</sup> Now Mowinckel's best evidence of this seems to come from the change in tone which he suggests follows an unrecorded oracle.<sup>3</sup> As we have seen, however, a spontaneous oracle of assurance is not the only way of explaining such dramatic changes in tone, though it does perhaps provide the most satisfactory explanation.

On all other fronts, however, Mowinckel's thesis is

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1. See above, pp.185f., 205, etc.

2. See, e.g., Welch, The Psalter in Life, History, and Worship, p.29; and Porteous, in Exp T, 62, 1950/51, p.5.

3. See above, pp.182, 200.

weak and full of contradictions. One aspect of this which is worth exploring is Mowinckel's conception of the prophet as the ideal prayer-man. He says that the prophet had long been recognised as intercessor and that we see this function in Pss.20,21. This prayer-function Mowinckel regards as having two parts, firstly, reciting the prayer on behalf of the congregation and secondly, giving the divine reply.<sup>1</sup> Again, he thinks that the substance of the answers was perhaps prescribed by the ritual.<sup>2</sup> But, as we shall see when we look further at intercession as a prophetic function, prayer is not a peculiarly prophetic task, nor is interceding quite the same as giving the divine reply.<sup>3</sup> Mowinckel offers, in the first instance, no strong evidence of unmistakably prophetic intercession in the Psalms. Indeed, he is reluctant to call most of his examples 'intercession' in any strict sense. Further, the oracles which he cites as evidence of prophetic replies, take the form of the priestly blessing rather than the prophetic prediction, i.e. the oracle in the sense of the future-predicting word.

It is true, of course, that the prophet is regarded as the man of Yahweh's powerful, creative word, but there is evidence to suggest that the priest could well have had this function within the cult. In his introduction to Psalmenstudien III, Mowinckel draws a distinction between the sacrificial and the sacramental elements of Israelite worship. It is in the sacramental that the prophet takes his place in

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1. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.62.

2. Ibid., p.57.

3. See above, pp.198f., and below, pp.278ff.

the liturgical rather than the ritual side of worship.<sup>1</sup> Yet, in discussing the Psalms, Mowinckel speaks of the offering of sacrifice and the receiving of omens and oracles in response to these sacrifices, as though there were some integral connection between the two elements.<sup>2</sup> Whilst he does add from time to time the point that the official offering sacrifice and the official receiving the divine reply need not always be the same person, he leaves open the possibility that they could be.<sup>3</sup> It has been suggested, however, that the clue to the meaning of sacrifice in ancient Israel lies in understanding prophetic symbolism; and this indicates that we may do wrong to distinguish between the sacrificial and the 'sacramental', the acted and the spoken parts of the worship in the way in which Mowinckel distinguishes between them. This suggestion and its implications for the functions of the priest and/or prophet within the cult should now be considered.

The suggestion comes in Wheeler Robinson's article,

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1. Quell has seriously challenged this notion on the ground that liturgy and prophecy are quite different. He sees no evidence that prophetic figures took part in cultic drama as an historical reality. He accuses Mowinckel of beginning with the false hypothesis that liturgy, drama, and prophecy belong together. On the contrary he believes that the cultic prophetic figure envisaged by Mowinckel does not resemble the prophet of the OT, whose words in no way provide liturgies, as their subject is God and not the community. God, he says, would speak in the cult anyway, through the priests (e.g. Ps.60:8). He further comments that Johnson does not deal with the material in the Psalms but treats the theory of cultic prophecy as if it were a phenomenologically known fact. Quell himself does not find in the cultic prophet theory an historical reality which is of significance in interpreting the texts, 'Der Kultprophet', TLZ, 81, 1956, cols.401ff.
  2. See above, pp.198f.
  3. As in Ps.20.

'Hebrew Sacrifice and Prophetic Symbolism'.<sup>1</sup> He begins by stating that sacrifice was originally the layman's act. The actual slaughtering of animal sacrifice continued to be performed by the man who provided it, as in the nomadic period. The priest, therefore, was not necessary. His primary function was that of giving Torah, decisions by the sacred oracle.<sup>2</sup> In the developed ritual of the Pentateuch, however, the priest takes so large a place that the rôle of the layman falls into the background. It may immediately be remarked that since both tasks, i.e. sacrificing and giving the oracle were at one time at least performed by the same person, viz., the priest, the priest is the ideal person for this dual rôle in the cult, as it is reflected in the Psalms.

Wheeler Robinson continues by saying that sacrifice was generally regarded in ancient Israel as doing something. It was 'efficacious'; hence the detailed attention given to it in the OT. Both priests and people believed that sacrifices made a difference in their relation to God. It is because of this that he thinks that prophetic symbolism may throw light on just what this difference was, for here, too, are 'personal acts conceived to be efficacious by their entrance into the divine purpose, and their consequent participation in the divine power'.<sup>3</sup>

Prophetic symbolism refers to the acts which were performed by the prophets in connection with, yet in relative

1. In JTS, 43, 1942; cf. Inspiration and Revelation in the OT, p.226, where he says that the interpretation of sacrifice can usefully be approached through the symbolic acts of the prophets.

2. In JTS, 43, 1942, p.129; cf. above, pp.158ff.

3. Ibid., p.131.

independence of, their oral prophecies, for example, Jeremiah's wearing of the yoke to represent the yoke of Babylon which is to be worn by the nations (Jer.27). Sometimes they are performed quite independently of the spoken word, as when Jeremiah broke the earthenware flask (Jer. 19:1ff.).<sup>1</sup> They were more than merely dramatic illustrations of the prophet's spoken word, however. They were part of it.<sup>2</sup> They themselves had an effect. They served not only to represent and make evident a particular fact, but also to make this fact a reality.<sup>3</sup> These acts of prophetic symbolism, however, were not, it is stressed, performed in an attempt to constrain God, as magic would be; 'they are performed at his command in order to achieve, or help to achieve, his own purpose'.<sup>4</sup> Lindblom says that there was no doubt a magical element in the activities of the early prophets, as they are conceived of by their contemporaries and described by the old narrators. Yet, he argues, it is wrong to make too much of the magical character of their words and acts. The power of the prophets, like that of the prophetic word, 'was derived from Yahweh's will and their word was always the fulfilment of Yahweh's plans and purposes concerning Israel and the world'.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.132.

2. Wheeler Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation, p.226; cf. Lindblom, PAI, p.52., where he says that the actions themselves has an effect (see further for discussion of prophetic symbolism, pp.53,165-173).

3. Lindblom, PAI, p.172.

4. Wheeler Robinson, in JTS, 43, 1942, p.132.

5. Lindblom, PAI, pp.54,172.



In a similar way, says Wheeler Robinson, we may think of the sacrificial act performed by the priest. The 'symbolic' function of sacrifice is parallel with and of the same order as the symbolic acts of the prophet. The ancient symbol is an effective part of that which it represents.<sup>1</sup> There is, he says, an impressive resemblance between the symbolic acts of the prophet and the sacrificial acts of the worshipper.<sup>2</sup> He mentions here the possible objection that there is a fundamental dissimilarity between the prophetic and the sacrificial act, in that the prophetic act is always ad hoc, the spontaneous expression of the activity of the living God, whereas the sacrifices are stereotyped parts of an elaborate system. But, he concludes, this dissimilarity is more apparent than real. Prophecy in its higher forms belongs to individuals and to very few of them. If we knew more about mass-prophecy, such as that of Ahab's court prophets, we should probably find that its behaviour, in word and deed, was conventional and stereotyped. It is interesting to notice in passing that Wheeler Robinson here distinguishes between types of prophecy, in terms of its being individual or mass-prophecy, spontaneous or stereotyped prophecy. This raises the question of whether if there were, as Mowinckel argues, prophetic figures in the cult who were institutional in the sense of being official, who delivered formalised oracles, these prophets should not be

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1. Wheeler Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation, p.207; cf. Mowinckel, PIW, I, pp.15-22, where he argues that the Israelite cult was regarded as objectively efficacious.

2. Wheeler Robinson, in JTS, 43, p.133.

distinguished from the freely-inspired, independent, individual, classical prophets.

The similarity between prophetic symbolism and priestly sacrifice is further seen, according to Wheeler Robinson, in the fact that they both require the interpretative word to make them articulate. 'Isaiah's captive garb needed the accompanying oracle to link it with the captivity of Ethiopia. The sacrificial gift also had to be particularized as an act of thanksgiving or reconciliation or petition; only the language of the ritual, partly reflected in the Book of Psalms, could give to the offering the precision of the offerer's intention.'<sup>1</sup> Now this brings us back to the question of whether we should distinguish between word and act, ascribing one function to the prophet and the other to the priest, in which case the oracular word in the Psalms might be taken as indicating the presence of prophets in the cult. It is clear, however, that everything militates against such a division. As we have just seen, the prophets performed symbolic acts, sometimes combined with and sometimes independently of the spoken word. Yet we cannot conclude from this that the sacrificial acts or any other sort of cultic symbolism were performed by prophets. Mowinckel does not suggest this, but is content to leave the act, the 'ritual', to the priests. Further, Wheeler Robinson, for all his emphasis on the similarity between prophetic symbolism and sacrifice, nowhere suggests that this indicates cultic participation by prophetic figures. The argument,

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1. Ibid., p.135.

in fact, moves rather in the opposite direction and leads one to conclude that it was the priest, performing the sacrificial acts, who also delivered the word in worship, the interpretative word, ensuring that the acts were performed with the right attitude,<sup>1</sup> and the creative word of blessing (or cursing).<sup>2</sup> Whilst he stresses that it is wrong to separate sacrifice from prophetic principles, as if the prophets conceived the maintenance of Israelite worship (which they certainly contemplated and desired) without some sort of sacrifice and that everything depended on the spirit in which sacrifice was performed, he nowhere suggests that there were in the cult prophetic figures performing the acts and giving their interpretation. This is rather the priests' task. Nor does he suggest that prophetic symbolism originated in the cult alongside sacrifice. It is essentially a parallel phenomenon with the same Semitic understandings behind it.<sup>3</sup> That the powerful word and the powerful act are by no means limited to the restricted sphere of the cult is also emphasised by von Rad. We see symbolism, he says, also in the realm of law, in connection with oaths, and in medicine etc. von Rad further argues that symbolic actions were by no means

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1. See Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.23 etc.

2. See, e.g., Wheeler Robinson, 'Prophetic Symbolism', in OT Essays, p.5, 'The spoken word amongst the Levites could gain an intrinsic power, as something let loose and not to be recalled, as we know from the Hebrew attitude towards blessings and curses...'.  
 3. Wheeler Robinson, in JTS, 43, 1942, p.133.

simply the prerogative of the prophets.<sup>1</sup> All this leads one to the conclusion that the most obvious person to deliver the powerful word in the cult is the priest. He is already there performing the symbolic act and it would seem natural for him to deliver the word accompanying or resulting from this act. From the general overlap in functions between priests and prophets, there would seem to be no need at all to import into cultic activity prophetic figures to explain the function of oracle-giving.

Related to this flaw in Mowinckel's thesis is one pointed out by Porteous.<sup>2</sup> This arises from Mowinckel's statement that the vast majority of the nebiim, representative of the congregation and performing orgiastic exercises on its behalf, were not actually cultic functionaries.<sup>3</sup> Porteous sums up well the questions raised by these flaws - 'Is it then really necessary to suppose that we have two classes of prophets associated with the sanctuaries, namely, a majority of lay prophets and a minority of cult prophets? May the supposed cult prophets not merely be priests who...were specially endowed to undertake the sacramental side of worship, but...did not feel forced into an attitude of criticism toward the cult? Halдар's principle of cumulation of functions<sup>4</sup> might well apply here'. Similarly, H. Ringgren says that although the one who gave divine answers was

1. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.96; cf. G.W. Anderson, The History and Religion of Israel, pp.81f.

2. Porteous, in Exp T, 62, 1950/51, p.8.

3. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, pp.16f.

4. See appendix.

probably a cultic official, we do not know whether he was called a prophet or a priest. He thinks we may do better to speak in this case of a priestly salvation oracle.<sup>1</sup> It could, of course, be said that we must not get too concerned with the terms, that it is the facts that matter. In this instance, however, the terms do matter, since it is by his use of terms that Mowinckel both argues (and confuses) his case. If what we find in the Pss. are priestly oracles, then no cultic prophet hypothesis is required to explain their presence there, and the term 'cultic prophet' again lacks definition, in that we no longer have any idea about the function of these prophets, if it was not to deliver oracles. Mowinckel's whole point, however, is that the oracular elements in the Psalms are prophetic and thus come from prophetic persons operating in the cult. We have seen that his argument in terms of function is weak at many points. We must now look further at the other argument, which he gives both in his introduction to and in his treatment of the oracular psalms, viz., that the style of these oracular elements is prophetic rather than priestly.

It is because of what he regards as their prophetic style that Mowinckel ultimately rejects the idea that these oracles come from the priest. He writes, 'There is no doubt that the "guidance" (tora) of the priest from the very first had a characteristic style of its own: the more or less apodictic instruction or order: "thou shalt do (not do) such and such a thing"; or with an introductory sentence

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1. Ringgren, Israelite Religion, p.217, and see above, p.160, note 2.



stating the particulars of the case, "thou shalt do so and so".<sup>1</sup> He continues, 'As far as the psalms are concerned, neither the promises ('oracles') of Yahweh that have been handed down to us, nor those that may be inferred from different allusions, have this form; they are all of them clearly and distinctly kept in the usual prophetic style'.<sup>2</sup> It is striking that in the examples discussed above, Mowinckel does not give a clear indication of what constitutes prophetic style. One feature which he does mention is the use of prophetic perfects, but then he finds this to be absent from one of the psalms which he treats as oracular, viz., Ps.72. Nor does he always keep prophetic style distinct from prophetic ideas.<sup>3</sup> Rather, he speaks vaguely of both and then feels justified in calling the oracle prophetic. Moreover, having said that it is unlikely that these promises come from the priests as they do not have the style of the priestly Torah, he then opens the door to attack by admitting that, in the time of the monarchy, these elements could have been uttered by a priest and himself says that, if this were the case, 'it shows how extraordinarily strong was the influence of the prophetic movement: the priest speaks like a prophet and in the traditional style of prophetic speech'.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.58; cf. Ps.St., III, pp.12ff.

2. Against Mowinckel it should be noted that some scholars claim that the style of these oracles is precisely that of the priestly  $\text{נִיבִי}$  and that we see the prophets imitating the priestly style. See, e.g., Gunkel, Einleitung, pp.328,374; cf. Östborn, op.cit., p.137, where he speaks of the canonical prophets employing the priestly mode of exposition, the tōrā-liturgy, e.g. Mic. 6:68; Isa.33:14-16.

3. See, for instance, his treatment of Ps.50.

4. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.58.

In this, Mowinckel comes very near to the view of Wheeler Robinson who, though admittedly speaking of post-exilic conditions, says, 'the assimilation of the prophetic contribution to Israel's religion had proceeded to a very marked extent. There would be nothing strange in the appearance of divine oracles as part of the liturgy'.<sup>1</sup> Wheeler Robinson goes further, however, saying that 'the priests as such had the tradition of their ancient oracular methods, and that tradition, adapted to the substance of prophetic truth, would supply a natural form of assurance to anxious worshippers, seeking an answer to their sacrifices and prayers'. There are, he agrees, numerous passages which do suggest the incorporation of prophetic forms of utterance in some temple-liturgies, but he claims that it is much more doubtful whether we can posit a special class of officials charged with these utterances. He concludes, 'On the whole, then, it is safer to confine ourselves to recognising some assimilation of prophetic forms as well as much of substance without admitting the necessary establishment of any separate order of temple-prophets'. This demonstrates the way in which Mowinckel's belief that the psalms represent cultic reality rather than poetic fiction can in part be reconciled with the idea that certain forms which belonged originally to a non-cultic, prophetic context are being used. The oracles actually belong to a living, cultic liturgy, but forms which contain prophetic elements do not necessarily imply the existence of prophets

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1. Wheeler Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation, p.225.

to utter them. For the fact is that some form will have to be used, and the OT evidences an interplay of influences which would indeed make it surprising if there were no interchange between cultic and prophetic forms. It is quite possible, of course, that there was a common stock of expression with no direct dependence either way. Now this raises another important point with regard to the relation of the prophets to the cult. For not only are there traces of prophetic forms in the Pss.; there are also traces of cultic forms in the Prophets.

As Rowley remarks, if there were, in fact, cultic prophets, it would be surprising if the only remains of their compositions were in the Psalter. Consequently, there has been an increasing tendency to find cultic liturgies or imitations of such liturgies in the prophetic books.<sup>1</sup> Mowinckel suggested that Joel and Habakkuk were Temple prophets, since their books contain passages in the form of the Psalms as well as prophetic liturgies.<sup>2</sup> A number of scholars think that Habakkuk was a cultic prophet at the Jewish Temple,<sup>3</sup> though a more cautious view is expressed by others, who believe that the book was either a liturgy for cultic use or an imitation of such a liturgy.<sup>4</sup> Of Joel, Lindblom says that he was a cultic prophet.<sup>5</sup> Engnell describes the book as a cultic liturgy, but Mowinckel himself becomes more cautious and says that the book gives

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1. Rowley, 'Ritual and the Hebrew Prophets', From Moses to Qumran, pp.131ff.

2. Mowinckel, Ps.St., III, pp.27ff.

3. e.g. Lindblom, PAI, p.254.

4. e.g., Nielsen, 'The Righteous and the Wicked in Habaququq', Studia Theologica, 6, 1953, p.59.

5. Lindblom, PAI, p.277.

evidence of strong influence from the forms of cultic liturgies in the Psalms. In fact, he says the same with regard to Habakkuk at this point.<sup>1</sup> Mowinckel now adheres to the view that Nahum was a Temple prophet, as does Eaton, who believes Zephaniah and Obadiah also to have been Temple prophets.

Engnell has gone so far as to divide the material found in the prophetic books into two main categories: what he calls the 'diwan type', which consists of direct oracle, and the liturgical type which is modelled on the cultic usage.<sup>2</sup>

Rowley is himself doubtful whether cultic liturgies formed any large part of the prophetic canon, though he thinks that it may well be that some such passages have been preserved. He considers it important that 'whatever can be read as oracle is more naturally to be read as oracle...'<sup>3</sup> His final attitude is one of caution. He writes, 'We cannot rule out the possibility that the work of any cultic prophet has been preserved in the prophetic canon, and I think the strongest possible case is made out for the book of Nahum...'<sup>4</sup> '...By and large I am persuaded that the oracles of the canonical prophets were not uttered as accompaniments of ritual acts, but were designed to warn their contemporaries of the dangers of the policies of their day and to call them to a deeper understanding of the ethical demands of their

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1. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.93.

2. Engnell, in Critical Essays on the OT; Svenskt Bibliskt Uppslagsverk, II, cols. 763ff.; and The Call of Isaiah, pp.59f.

3. Rowley, in From Moses to Qumran, p.134.

4. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, p.170 (cf. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.189).

faith'.<sup>1</sup>

The use of cultic forms by the prophets and what this tells us about the prophet's position and functions will be considered more closely in chapter IV, but before leaving this question, brief mention should be made of a view put forward by Kapelrud. Though he himself regards certain of the canonical prophets as linked with the cult,<sup>2</sup> he rejects the idea that cultic language necessarily indicates cultic involvement. He contends that the cult was an important part of the prophets' social background. The cult, he argues, was not a rather unimportant series of acts taking place in the Temple. On the contrary, it represented the meeting-place of the people and the cult performances were important acts in the life of the people. Consequently, cultic language was the familiar language. Thus, the prophets in using cultic language were using language which could immediately be understood by everyone, since the cult was a part of the normal life in Israel and ideas and expressions from the cult were frequently used. Far from this proving that the prophets themselves were professionally involved in the cult, he says, 'they very often borrowed their language from the same circles against which they were struggling'.<sup>3</sup>

Related to this is the observation that even if some of the canonical prophets were involved in the cult, this

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1. Ibid.

2. e.g., in Joel Studies, Kapelrud contends that Joel himself was a temple prophet circa 600 B.C.

3. Kapelrud, 'Cult and Prophetic Words', Studia Theologica, 3, 1050/51.



involvement need have been in no way official. Thus the arguments of A.R. Johnson and others, emphasising all the possible references to prophets in the cultic surroundings of shrines and the Temple have produced a backlash from those anxious to point out that 'cult' had a more inclusive meaning than these scholars are willing to acknowledge. Porteous, for instance, says 'It might...be argued that, as the king is a sacral personality, then prophets attached to his court for the purposes of consultation (1 Kgs.22)... are cultic officials. This, however, would be to stretch the meaning of the word "cult" unduly.... A great deal might go on in the temple besides the regular cultic acts'.<sup>1</sup> Similarly Rowley insists that we cannot immediately assume participation in some official activity even where a prophet functions within the precincts of a shrine and that there are many instances where no cultic ceremony would have figured.<sup>2</sup> He mentions at this point Halдар's deduction from the Temple sermon (Jer.7) that Jeremiah 'obviously' belonged to the Temple staff and reminds us of Jesus' teaching in the Temple (e.g. Mt.21:23ff.; Mk.11:27f.). Rowley writes, 'If the term "cultic prophet" is to be given any meaning, it must denote a person who took some defined part in the official services of the shrine and not merely a person who spoke to groups of people in the Temple court. Much went on in the Temple besides sacrifice and its accompanying ritual. Prophets were sacred persons, and it was not unnatural that

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1. Porteous, in Exp T, 62, 1950/51, p.7, note 9.

2. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, p.157. With particular reference to Jeremiah, see also pp.150ff. and cf. From Moses to Qumran, pp.128f.

they should visit shrines or that they should take the opportunity of delivering the word of God to the people who congregated there'.<sup>1</sup>

Lindblom, too, seems prepared to allow the prophets some involvement in the cult without conceding that they were cultic prophets. Though he believes that 'The cultic texts in the forms of oracles and the liturgies which frequently occur in the Book of Psalms prove that prophets served as ordinary functionaries at the sanctuaries',<sup>2</sup> he goes on, 'Now the question arises whether any of the great prophets were cultic prophets in the strict sense, i.e., were permanently attached to a sanctuary and received their livelihood there'.<sup>3</sup> There is considerable evidence, he says, proving the positive attitude of the prophets towards the cultic life of their people. It was under the influence of the cultic ceremonies that Isaiah received his inaugural vision in the Temple of Jerusalem; and the background for his criticism of the sacrificial ceremonies in the sanctuary of Jerusalem (Isa.1) could well have been his zeal for the holy house of Yahweh. Nonetheless, Lindblom believes that there is no evidence that Isaiah or his private circle of disciples, was attached to the Temple staff. Similarly, Jeremiah belonged to a priestly family, but it is never stated that he himself was a priest belonging to the Temple staff, and from the descriptions of his personal life, this seems unlikely. Ezekiel was expressly described as a priest, but

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1. Ibid., p.159.

2. Lindblom, PAI, p.207.

3. Ibid., p.208.

he was called, according to Lindblom, to be a prophet in Babylon, where there was no Jewish Temple.<sup>1</sup> From these and other references, Lindblom deduces that any connection between the prophets and the sanctuaries is not a necessary one. He does think that there were professional Temple prophets, but, he writes, 'The special prophetic endowment, the gift of ecstasy and the power of receiving revelations and giving oracles was not limited to special official positions and was not the monopoly of special functionaries...'.<sup>2</sup>

From these comments, particularly Lindblom's, two very important points emerge. Firstly, that, in spite of the weighty arguments against regarding the Psalms as irrefutable evidence of prophetic cultic functions and functionaries, the view that there were cultic prophets with a defined place in the cultus of the Temple has found a growing following among scholars. Those who, on the whole, incline to the idea include Jepsen,<sup>3</sup> Welch,<sup>4</sup> Pedersen,<sup>5</sup> Hyatt,<sup>6</sup> G.W. Anderson,<sup>7</sup> and Eichrodt,<sup>8</sup> though it is significant that some of these

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1. Ibid., pp.208ff. (cf. de Vaux, op.cit., p.385 and Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, pp.149ff.). Lindblom does think, however, that 'the book of Habakkuk with its liturgical character is more intelligible if we assume that its author really was a Temple prophet'. He believes the same to be true of the books of Nahum, Joel, and Malachi.
  2. Ibid., p.210.
  3. Nabi, pp.191ff.
  4. Prophet and Priest in Old Israel, p.76.
  5. Israel, III-IV, pp.115ff.
  6. Prophetic Religion, p.57.
  7. In Peake's Commentary on the Bible, 133d and The History and Religion of Israel, pp.81f.
  8. Theology of the OT, I, p.333.

scholars join Vriezen,<sup>1</sup> and Rowley<sup>2</sup> in the list of those who would question it. The main reasons for this wide acceptance of the idea of cultic prophets are firstly that the softening of the lines between priest and prophet and between the different positions and functions of prophets, is recognised to be good, secondly the connections between prophets and sanctuaries, and thirdly that there are elements in the Psalms which can convincingly be explained in terms of cultic prophets. For although as argued earlier, it would seem that these oracles could conceivably have been delivered by priests, cultic prophecy remains an attractive explanation of this phenomenon. The cultic prophet fits the bill well, though there is still room for argument that the priest could fit it as well or even better.

The second point to emerge, and this is of vital importance, is that if there existed cultic prophets then they were of a particular 'type' and are probably to be distinguished from the canonical prophets.<sup>3</sup> The question can be formulated: who were these cultic prophets and what relation did they and their functions bear to the canonical prophets and their functions?

As we have already seen, Mowinckel himself makes a distinction between the cultic prophets and the canonical prophets. He speaks of the 'loyal', 'state prophets', as distinct from those hostile to the cult like Amos, and says that the promises found in the Psalms are proclaimed by the

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1. An Outline of OT Theology, pp.234f.

2. Worship in Ancient Israel, p.152.

3. On the difficulty of regarding either 'false' prophets or the canonical prophets as a 'type', see above, ch.II, pp. 53f., passim.

former.<sup>1</sup> He thinks then that there is a difference in attitude between the two types of prophet. It is interesting that Mowinckel regards the admonitory element in the oracles as being due to the influence of the 'reform prophets'.<sup>2</sup> We saw that one of his attempts to refute the claim that because the oracles were always auspicious these prophets were insincere, lay in citing evidence of a moral awareness in oracular psalms, notably Ps.50.<sup>3</sup> One wonders why it has suddenly become perfectly acceptable for cultic words not to be thoroughly auspicious? If the cult can include admonitory words in Ps.50, why not in other places, i.e., in the oracles of the cultic prophets which Mowinckel has insisted are naturally and inevitably auspicious? The corollary of Mowinckel's argument here is that the cultic prophets were essentially different from the canonical prophets, in that they were expected to prophesy  $\square 17 \psi$  ; this was their task, whilst the canonical prophets did not prophesy to meet expectation and their prophecies were characteristically words of doom.<sup>4</sup> One of his other arguments here, viz., that the so-called cultic prophets prophesied on the basis of what the congregation should be ideally, is in no way a defence of their prophesying bona fide and only serves to confirm the impression that they differed radically from the canonical prophets who recognised that the assumption of the ideal and the consequent promise of peace was extremely dangerous

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1. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.56.

2. Ibid., pp.67-72.

3. See above, pp.189-191.

4. cf. above, ch.II, pp. 112ff., where the impossibility of simply equating canonical prophets with prophets of doom is discussed, and see below, pp.235ff.



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and who inveighed against this danger. The distinction will be returned to, but there is a second distinction which Mowinckel makes between the two types of prophets, viz., a difference of inspiration. The cultic prophet, he says, enjoys an official, occupational inspiration, a permanent, charismatic equipment belonging to the office itself.<sup>1</sup>

Mowinckel's line of demarcation, however, between these cultic prophets and the canonical prophets is almost immediately blurred by the fact that Joel and Habakkuk are claimed as cultic prophets; hence, as mentioned above, all the investigations in the two or three decades since, dedicated to showing that others were cultic prophets.

The distinction was well and truly blurred by Halder, a/ who distorted the cultic prophecy theory, pressing it to extremes. He asserted that no difference is to be made between the canonical prophets and their predecessors.<sup>2</sup> This point of view has been vigorously condemned by Eissfeldt for 'taking too much upon itself in regarding all the prophets without exception as cult prophets and explaining as many as possible of their sayings and acts accordingly'.<sup>3</sup> Eissfeldt continues, 'Such exaggeration is doubly dangerous where recourse is had to methods which depend on general ancient oriental cult-myth "patterns"'.  
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1. Mowinckel, PIW, II, p.57.

2. Halder, op.cit., especially pp.138ff. He saw all OT prophecy in terms of the Babylonian bārū and mabḥū guilds of diviners. See appendix.

3. Eissfeldt, 'The Prophetic Literature', in The OT and Modern Study, p.159.

If this is so, then, is Mowinckel correct in his differentiation and should we now draw as sharp a line between two sorts of prophet as was formerly drawn between prophet and priest? Should we link cultic prophets with the priests and set them over against the canonical prophets as persons of a wholly different order who should never have been designated by the same name?<sup>1</sup> As we saw in the previous chapter, easy divisions between cultic and non-cultic, true and false, ecstatic and non-ecstatic break down in the face of the OT material and rather than formulate simple schemes, it is 'wiser to recognise the many varieties of prophet in Israel'.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, the identification has often been made between the so-called cultic prophets and the 'false' prophets with whom the canonical prophets came into conflict. The reasons for this identification must now be investigated.

The chief factor behind this equation of 'false' and 'cultic' prophecy is the function which, according to Mowinckel and Johnson,<sup>3</sup> belongs to the 'cultic' prophets. This function was to proclaim and to secure  $\square 17 \psi$ . Producing  $\square 17 \psi$  by their powerful word was their primary obligation. Now the activity of prophesying  $\square 17 \psi$  is the very one which we see condemned by one canonical prophet after another (e.g. Mic.3:5-8; Jer.6:13f.; 8:10f.; 14:13; 23:17; Ezek.13:10,16). It is characteristic of the 'false'

1. As done by Jepsen, Nabi. His distinction is not between cultic and non-cultic prophets, however, but between professional and non-ecstatic prophets. cf. Heaton, The OT Prophets, p.39.

2. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, p.148.

3. See above, pp.141,189, etc.

prophets who are here condemned that they preach weal. They find nothing to condemn in the life of the people and promise good fortune and prosperity. Thus, they are condemned for leading the people astray by giving them unwarranted promises of weal. Could it possibly be then that these two groups of prophets not only have this in common but are to be positively identified? Is the whole function or 'office' of weal-proclaiming false? That the prophetic tradition in some canonical prophecy is one of proclaiming woe lends credence to the idea that the prophets whom they attack are prophets of weal. We saw in the previous chapter, however, that a clear division between prophets of weal and prophets of woe is simply not possible.<sup>1</sup> The canonical prophets, on occasion, prophesied weal and, so it is argued, the 'cultic' prophets whose oracles appear in the Psalms, could proclaim woe. On this last point, Rowley writes, 'It has been suggested that the cultic prophets are to be identified with the false prophets, but, if their function was in any way such as Mowinckel and Johnson conceive it, this cannot be right. For here are messages which are not unworthy of the greater prophets. If this linking of the psalms with the cultic prophets is wrong, then we have no clue to the kind of activities in which these prophets engaged'.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Lindblom argues that the cultic prophets could not be 'false' prophets, as the Psalms show that some of these prophets could be filled with a

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1. See above, ch.II, pp.112ff.

2. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, pp.165ff.

'true moral zeal'.<sup>1</sup> As we have seen, Mowinckel, too, argues for the integrity of the cultic prophets on the ground that there was in the cult an awareness of moral and religious demands.<sup>2</sup> It is to be remarked, however, that he offers few examples of these ethical oracles (notably Ps.50; and see also Pss.81,95) and one wonders how he can consistently argue that at the same time these prophets were obliged to proclaim promises of well-being. Either it was impossible for them to proclaim anything but well-being, for the reasons which he gives,<sup>3</sup> or it was possible for them to proclaim admonitory words to Israel, in which case, Mowinckel has not answered satisfactorily the charge that it is strange that their oracles are always auspicious. The only way to reconcile these unfailing promises of well-being with a 'true moral zeal' is by thinking that these prophets were not out to deceive the people deliberately, but were themselves misled and so prophesied  $\square\Gamma\psi$  in bad 'good faith', and this because such favourable proclamation was, in fact, their function.

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1. Lindblom, PAI, p.215.

2. See above, pp.189-191, and cf. Würthwein, 'Kultpolemik oder Kultbescheid?', in Tradition und Situation, p.129, where he says that it should not be assumed that an unfavourable message could not be uttered by cultic prophets and that precisely because they wanted wellbeing, these prophets had, for the sake of the community, to be willing now and then to pronounce judgement on such things as defiled the community, and p.130, where he says that Pss.15 and 24, for example, show how strongly obedience to Yahweh's will was impressed on those who would take part in the cult. He also thinks that the asserverations of innocence in the laments are to be attributed to the cultic prophets, providing examples which show the awareness that only he who is  $\rho\text{'}\tau\psi$  may expect an oracle of wellbeing.

3. Mowinckel, PIW, II, pp.65ff.



The nature of the proclamation of the cultic prophets and what this tells us about the function of these prophets has been investigated by Jeremias.<sup>1</sup> He points out that in the renewed discussion about the canonical prophets and their relation to the cult, true and false prophecy, word and spirit, vocation and office, there are two distinct questions being asked. Firstly, were there in Israel cultic prophets, and secondly, were the canonical prophets cultic prophets? He thinks that the issue is centred on the question of weal or woe, in that it has been established that the cultic prophets' primary obligation was to produce  $\square 170$  for Israel, whilst the canonical prophets characteristically proclaimed woe. He says, however, that, as we have seen, this issue is not as clearcut as it appears to be at first sight. He, therefore, sets out to compare the proclamation of woe which he thinks appears in cultic prophecy with the proclamation of woe in the canonical prophets.<sup>2</sup>

To clarify the relationship of the canonical prophets to the cultic prophets, Jeremias uses Nahum, Habakkuk, and the oracular psalms. Nahum is found to have been a prophet of doom, comparable to Hosea and Zephaniah, before his words were reconstituted by exilic cultic prophets. But Habakkuk is recognised as a cultic prophet in spite of such redaction, in that he proclaimed judgement against Israelites, but not

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1. Jeremias, Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung in der späten Königszeit Israels.

2. Ibid., pp.1-10.

against Israel as a whole. This distinction between righteous and sinners in Israel which, Jeremias claims, is made by the cultic prophets, as opposed to the blanket condemnation uttered by non-cultic prophets, is then developed as the decisive difference between the two forms of prophecy. With regard to the lament-liturgies in the Psalter, Jeremias accepts Mowinckel's claim that there are here prophetic elements and that there are words of judgement, in e.g., Pss.12,14,75. He argues that these words of judgement are not, however, against Israel as a whole.<sup>1</sup> He looks also at Pss.82 and 58 in which he again finds the judgement of godless men, and at the great festival psalms (50;81;95).

Regarding the cultic prophetic proclamation of judgement, Jeremias considers there to be three distinct streams of tradition flowing into this proclamation: the cultic proclamation of the law and of curses, the prophetic proclamation of punitive action, and wisdom teaching.<sup>2</sup> He rejects the argument put forward by Würthwein<sup>3</sup> that the origin of the prophetic proclamation of judgement against Israel lies in the cult.<sup>4</sup> He also rejects Würthwein's suggestion<sup>5</sup> that the prophets were not attacking the cult but actually giving cultic direction (in passages such as Am.5:21ff.), since he holds that sacrifice, with which these passages are concerned, was the realm of the priest and to be

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1. Ibid., pp.110f.

2. Ibid., p.139.

3. Würthwein, in ZThK, 49, 1952.

4. Jeremias, op.cit., pp.151ff.

5. Würthwein, in Tradition und Situation, and see further, ch.IV.

giving such cultic direction, the prophet would be occupying an alien, priestly office.<sup>1</sup> He concludes that judgement against Israel as a whole is not to be found on the lips of cultic prophets and that it is unthinkable in cult prophecy that Israel's relationship with God is hopelessly broken.<sup>2</sup> Jeremias then gives some attention to the argument of Reventlow and Gunneweg<sup>3</sup> that the collective curses in Dt.28 and Lev.26 indicate a proclamation against all Israel in Israel's worship. Jeremias argues that such collective cursing is not known before the seventh century, that we first find it in the canonical prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and he reiterates the opinion that judgement against all Israel in the realm of the cult is unthinkable.<sup>4</sup>

In the first part of his enquiry, Jeremias tries to answer the question, what is the relationship between cultic prophets and canonical prophets? Were the prophets of woe cultic prophets, i.e., had they the same position as those in Israel's cult? There is, he thinks, a similarity in that some canonical prophets do proclaim woe to individuals or to certain groups within Israel, e.g., the king, priests and prophets. But, he contends, unlike these prophets, the

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1. Jeremias, op.cit., pp.156-162.

2. Ibid., pp.162. It may, of course, be questioned whether it is accurate to say that the canonical prophets thought the relationship was irretrievably severed.

3. Reventlow, Wächter über Israel, pp.12f., 15f., 42f. etc.; and Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos, pp.82ff.; Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia, pp.168ff.; 'Kultisches Recht im AT', ZThK, 60, 1963, pp.267ff.; and Gunneweg, Mündliche und schriftliche Tradition, pp.116f.; 'Erwägungen zu Am. 7:14', ZThK, 57, 1960, pp.1-6.

4. Jeremias, op.cit., pp.164-175, and see below, ch.IV, pp. 339ff.

cultic prophets cannot proclaim judgement against all Israel, as their task in worship is to pray for the needs of Israel. The declamations against evildoers are, in fact, part of this appeal to Yahweh. The cultic prophets are obliged to seek weal for Israel and, therefore, speak against sinners and foreigners who hinder this weal. The canonical prophets, on the other hand, proclaim the end for Israel (e.g. Am.8:2; Hos.1:6; Isa.6:10ff.; 22:14; Jer.7:15; 15:6). They proclaim the sin of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

This vital distinction is due, he says, not just to a different historical situation, but to a different understanding of the prophetic task. Can then, he asks, the cultic prophets be described as Temple prophets in the full sense and the prophets of woe as free prophets? His view is that it is the primary function of all prophets to bring Yahweh's will and way to his people, as mediators of the needs and enquiries of the people before Yahweh. In this, there were prophets who would be connected with the cult (e.g. 2 Kgs.4:23), but without being cultic prophets in the strict sense, whilst there were others who had an official, cultic function. Jeremias believes that these are the prophets of Jeremiah's polemic (e.g. Jer.23), the 'false' prophets.<sup>2</sup> The canonical prophets are called to be Yahweh's messengers and regard this as more important than fulfilling the official function of interceding and enquiring of Yahweh. They do not attack these prophetic functions in themselves,

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1. Ibid., pp.176-179.

2. Ibid., pp.179-188.

but rather their misuse (e.g. Jer.27:18; Ezek.13:5). They attack the organised, 'false' prophets, because they are lacking in divine legitimation, because their office of proclaiming weal for Israel is central and weal the whole point of their proclamation.<sup>1</sup>

Jeremias here offers a convincing explanation of why the messages of cultic prophets should be characterised by weal. At some points, it is close to Mowinckel's explanation but it stresses the understanding of the prophetic task which lay behind their messages, viz. an official function of securing  $\square \uparrow \downarrow \cup$  for Israel. It is also convincing in that it works with a view of 'false' prophecy which fits the rather imprecise and puzzling evidence of the OT. It has often been said that if the division between true and false were as simple as one between cultic and non-cultic prophets, it should have been possible to indicate it more simply than the OT does,<sup>2</sup> and that there are no clear grounds for supposing that at any point Israel ever regarded formal attachment to the cult as a criterion for determining the falseness of a prophet's preaching.<sup>3</sup> Certainly, it would seem to be

1. Ibid., pp.191ff. Though he differs at some fundamental points, Hentschke propounds a similar argument, op.cit. He does not think there can be a simple equation of prophets of weal and cultic prophets, but he does think that for the prophets of weal, bound by expectation, a cultic connection was conceivable whilst for the prophets of woe, bound by Yahweh's word, it was inconceivable (pp. 165ff.). He regards Nahum, Habakkuk, and Joel as cultic prophets, as proclaimers of  $\square \uparrow \downarrow \cup$  and technical mediators of the divine question and answer. But he sets them apart from the other canonical prophets who, he thinks, lacked an official, institutional office comparable with that of the priests (pp.145,174).

2. e.g., by Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, p.166.

3. e.g., by Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, p.52, and see above, ch.II, p.118.



impossible to identify 'cultic' and 'false' prophets, as though all 'false' prophets were cultic and all 'cultic' prophets false. Nonetheless, the twin-fact remains that it was the task of the cultic prophets, according to those who propound the theory, to proclaim and achieve  $\text{נִלְוֹ}$  and that it seems that the 'false' prophets often proclaimed  $\text{נִלְוֹ}$ , whatever the circumstances and this because they were expected and required to do so. This does not necessarily call the integrity of either 'cultic' or 'false' prophets into question. As we saw earlier, the OT makes plain that prophets could be false without its being clearly apparent, even to themselves.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, it would seem to be at least plausible that cultic prophets existed in Israel, in that their existence provides an attractive explanation of some of the oracular elements in the Psalms. In the OT  $\text{נִלְוֹ}$  is characteristically given by the prophets (e.g. Jer.18:18). So, in the Psalms, it can be argued, the reception of  $\text{נִלְוֹ}$  is likely to come not through the priest but through cultic prophets. If they existed, their task was to proclaim  $\text{נִלְוֹ}$  for Israel. Now the 'false' prophets of the OT are frequently linked with the priests which suggests cultic association and they characteristically proclaim  $\text{נִלְוֹ}$  for Israel. Both 'cultic' and 'false' prophets, it can be argued, proclaimed  $\text{נִלְוֹ}$  because this was their official task. This suggests that the two groups of prophets might be equated. On the other hand, it is not at all clear that the phenomenon of false prophecy bears

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1. See above, ch.II, pp.120f.

a definite relationship to cultic practice, in that false messages of weal could be given outside a cultic setting (e.g. Jer.28), and we have no passages in the canonical prophets explicitly criticising the cultic practices of cultic prophets. As we shall see later, the practice of intercession which, so it is claimed, represents a cultic prophetic practice, seems to be engaged in by the canonical prophets and not to be condemned in itself.<sup>1</sup>

This suggests that if there were cultic prophets in Israel they were not necessarily false, by virtue of their official position and their proclaiming weal, but they could well have been so, as their official position required them to prophesy weal, whatever the state of the nation. This was their function, their prophetic office. Conversely, not all 'false' prophets were necessarily cultic but perhaps 'the majority of the "false prophets" were to be found among the cultic prophets', since 'one of the main professional tasks of these cultic prophets was to announce Šālôm in the interest of the royal house and of official policy, to encourage the people, and by the power of their prophetic words influence the course of events in a favourable direction'.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to the canonical prophets, it seems unlikely that they had an official cultic position and function, and extremely likely, as Jeremias argues, that they had a different conception of their prophetic task from that of the 'cultic' prophets as defined above. Whilst they could well have had connections with the cult and perhaps could not

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1. See below.

2. Lindblom, PAI, p.215, and cf. ch.II, pp.124f.

conceive of Israelite religion without the cult, there remain the strong criticisms by the canonical prophets of the worship of their day, which make it almost impossible to imagine their official participation in it. There also remains their polemic against the prophets who prophesy unflinching prosperity for Israel though admittedly this does not occur in all the canonical prophets. Whilst weal is not devoid from their own messages and whilst judgement is not devoid from the messages delivered in the cult, it seems reasonable to suppose that if there existed cultic prophets whose raison d'être was the proclamation of  $\text{D}15\text{U}$  to Israel then they were of a different type from the canonical prophets whose sole function lay in proclaiming Yahweh's word, whatever this might be and wherever this was required.

Thus, if there was in Israel a cultic prophetic office in the sense of a recognised cultic position with recognised cultic functions, then it does not seem to have belonged to the canonical prophets. We are completely lacking in evidence of their having such an office,<sup>1</sup> whilst there is much evidence that militates against the idea. If, therefore, the canonical prophets had an 'office' at all, it would seem to be highly unlikely that this was in any sense cultic. The other possibilities of a prophetic office with defined functions must now be considered.

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1. The suggestion that cultic form in the canonical prophets provides precisely such evidence will be taken up again in ch.IV.

## ii) Public Action and Utterance

The first three of the four 'offices' which, it is sometimes claimed, belonged to the OT prophets are, in fact, closely related to each other. Brief mention will be given here of the suggestions that the prophet's office was that of messenger or of watchman, but both of these suggestions have largely, though not exclusively, been developed in terms of the idea that the prophet's office was that of spokesman and this is, therefore, the central concept here.

### a) Messenger

It has emerged at various points in the previous discussion that the prophet's self-understanding of his function and position lay in his conviction that he was Yahweh's messenger, and moreover, that it was as Yahweh's messenger that he was regarded and respected by other people.<sup>1</sup> The two main sources of evidence for this, viz., the call narratives and the messenger formula will be considered in more detail in later chapters,<sup>2</sup> but the prophet's function as messenger should be mentioned here. J. Muilenburg, in his essay, 'The "Office" of the Prophet in Ancient Israel', says that the prophets, from Moses onwards, are first of all messengers.<sup>3</sup> As such, they are speakers for Yahweh, sent to particular times to speak particular words. They do more than repeat inherited and traditional clichés; they seek to

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1. See above, chs. I, pp. 48-51, and II, pp. 77-79, etc.

2. On the 'messenger-formula', see particularly ch. IV, pp. 474ff.

3. In The Bible in Modern Scholarship; cf. Lindblom, PAI, pp. 148-165, and Ross, 'The Prophet as Yahweh's Messenger', in Israel's Prophetic Heritage.

make the word of God immediate and relevant and contemporary.<sup>1</sup> We see at once here the way in which, in defining what it meant for the prophets to be messengers, all sorts of other concepts are brought in. In this case, the suggestion is that the prophets were messengers of Yahweh's covenant, making the covenant proclamation 'immediate and relevant and contemporary'.

Similarly, Zimmerli says that when the prophets of the later period are examined about the nature of their office, they do not point back to the earlier history of seers and ecstasies (as seen in 1 Sam.). He writes, 'The form-critical study of the prophetic preaching shows that the prophet regarded himself as the messenger of Yahweh, who had to deliver the decision of his God and the announcement of the divine action'. Then he goes on to say that we must ask whether the prophet in Israel, who was commissioned by God with his message, shows that he regarded himself as a messenger of the covenant, which was characterised by the law of God proclaimed within it.<sup>2</sup>

A similar idea is present in Reventlow's essay, 'Prophetenamt und Mittleramt'.<sup>3</sup> He is here concerned with the use by the prophets of the messenger formula, כֹּהֵן אֲנִי וְיְהוָה אֵלֵי, and with what this tells us about the prophetic office. His conclusion is that the prophet conceives his primary task

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1. Muilenburg, in The Bible in Modern Scholarship, pp.96f.

2. Zimmerli, The Law and the Prophets, p.62.

3. Reventlow, 'Prophetenamt und Mittleramt', ZThK, 58, 1961. See further, ch.IV, pp.479ff.



to be that of being God's messenger.<sup>1</sup> This constitutes, in Reventlow's opinion, a regulated office of the transmission of the word.<sup>2</sup> The core of his argument, however, is that this office is fundamentally the office of Moses as mediator of the covenant law.<sup>3</sup>

It need not be, of course, that these views represent a true estimate of what it meant for an OT prophet to be Yahweh's messenger. What they represent is rather only one way of defining this 'office' which may be accepted or rejected without necessarily determining the importance of the fundamental concept of the prophet as messenger. Its value can only be assessed by examining the idea of the prophet as holding an office as the speaker of the covenant law.

#### b) Watchman

Much of this also pertains to the idea of the prophet as watchman. This is seen particularly in Reventlow's study of Ezekiel.<sup>4</sup> A form-critical study, this seeks to show the relation, in respect of form and content, of the utterances of Ezekiel with Lev.26, and with the central Israelite revelation-tradition which found its liturgical fixation in the covenant festival. Reventlow argues that practically the whole of Ezekiel's preaching and even its linguistic features such as vocabulary and metre derive from Lev.26, the prophet's oracles of doom corresponding to the curses

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1. Ibid., p.283.

2. Ibid., p.284.

3. Ibid., pp.279ff.

4. Reventlow, Wächter über Israel.

there, and the oracles of weal to the blessings. In this, Reventlow argues, Ezekiel's office is a direct continuation of the office of the preacher who recited the blessings and curses at the festival of the covenant. To this the whole of the prophet's activity, as watchman, lawgiver, and judge are related. Reventlow selects groups of passages to illustrate Ezekiel as Unheilsprophet, Heilsprophet, Geschichtsprophet, Gesetzprophet, Wächter, and Fremvölkerprophet. His conclusion is that Ezekiel is not a religious individualist, free from legal and cultic dependence, but the bearer of an office, who fulfilled that office in close connection with the tradition of the covenant festival.

Ezekiel's 'office' as watchman receives a different treatment at the hands of Eichrodt.<sup>1</sup> He does not think that the conviction of being Yahweh's watchman over Israel (see Ezek. 3:16-21; 33:7-16) represents merely the particular feelings of Ezekiel,<sup>2</sup> as, for instance, some have argued that intercession in Jeremiah springs from his particular feelings.<sup>3</sup> Rather, he thinks, it constitutes a definite development in the exercise of the prophetic office. He rejects, however, Reventlow's understanding of this. What we find in Ezekiel, he argues, is not the language of a general warning in the cult, but a warning to a people with specific misdeeds, not the impersonal style of the sacral

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1. Eichrodt, 'Das prophetische Wächteramt', in Tradition und Situation.

2. Ibid., p. 31.

3. See below, pp. 298ff.

law but the special warning of the watchman appointed by Yahweh for his people.<sup>1</sup> There are, he thinks, resemblances to the proclamation in the covenant festival and with the priestly activity in the cult, but there are also differences.<sup>2</sup> This task of watchman represents something new in the prophetic office, in that a new situation has arisen. He has to deal with the people whose attitude is seen in Ezek.18:21ff.<sup>3</sup> The importance of this task to Ezekiel's prophetic office is due, says Eichrodt, to the prophet's increased solidarity with his people at this time. He is a pastor and his chief task is  $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$ .<sup>4</sup>

So we see that Ezekiel's 'office' as watchman may be defined in terms of a specific cultic office. On the other hand, it may be defined in far more general terms. Ezekiel is a watchman (  $\text{הַשָּׂרֵף}$  ) in that he has to warn the wicked among his compatriots lest they die because of their wicked conduct'.<sup>5</sup> 'He had to look out for what was to happen in accordance with Yahweh's purpose and then warn his compatriots'.<sup>6</sup> In this, the prophetic task of watchman

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1. Eichrodt, in Tradition und Situation, p.31.

2. Ibid., p.39 (cf. von Rad, OT Theology, II, pp.224f., where he says that Ezekiel's roots are in the sacral tradition of the priesthood. He is dependent on it and yet free from it).

3. Ibid., pp.35-38.

4. Ibid., p.41. cf. von Rad, OT Theology, II, pp.213f., where he suggests that Ezekiel's pastoral office is more than just an extension of his prophetic calling. It is, in his view, a special mediatorial office which affects his own life, in that the lives of the people are required at his hands.

5. Lindblom, PAI, p.230.

6. Ibid., p.204.

resembles that of assayer, as we see it in Jer.6:27 -

וְחֹן נָתַן בְּעַמִּי חֹצֵר וְתֹדֵעַ וְנֹחַת אֶת־דְּרֹכָם

The prophet is appointed to examine his people, distinguishing between that which is good and that which is evil.<sup>1</sup> According to von Rad, all the prophets from Amos to Malachi each in his own way regarded this 'office' of assayer as his. It demanded sustained vigilance in passing judgement upon men and circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

There is, of course, in the case of Ezekiel, the question of when he received this task of being watchman. It is generally thought that the connection of this part of the prophet's 'office' (Ezek.3:16-21) with his call (Ezek.3:1-9) is due to redaction, the intention being to make the entrusting of the watchman's task to him a part of his call.<sup>3</sup> Lindblom says that 'there is good reason to suppose that the prophet became conscious of this mission as a watchman at a later stage of his prophetic career rather than at its beginning, when general judgement and punishment were the chief themes of his preaching'. Nonetheless, for it to be 'natural for a collector to think that the task of a watchman was given Ezekiel from the beginning, as an element in his general prophetic calling',<sup>4</sup> the task must surely have been

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1. Ibid.

2. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.74.

3. Ibid., p.230. cf. Lindblom, PAI, p.230, 'Those critics are certainly right who hold that the oracle about Ezekiel's mission as a watchman was originally (when he uttered it) associated with the parable as an element in its interpretation and that its setting in that narrative of the call is secondary'.

4. Lindblom, PAI, p.230.

an important one (cf. chs. 18 and 14:21ff. where we also see this function). Whether or not it can be said to constitute Ezekiel's prophetic 'office', however, is doubtful.<sup>1</sup> It seems rather to be an important feature of his general 'office', one of his prophetic functions, that is, of course, unless Reventlow's exaggerated form-critical view of a cultic office is accepted, and even then to be a 'watchman' is not the prophet's sole task.

### c) Spokesman

As we have seen, the conviction that the OT prophet was primarily Yahweh's messenger is held by many scholars and receives strong support from the biblical material. The prophet is then in the first instance the messenger or the spokesman of Yahweh, receiving and proclaiming his word. But the question then arises, what is the nature and content of this prophetic word? The question is surely capable of many answers, but it has received one particular answer which is of great importance with regard to the idea of a prophetic office, viz., that the OT prophet is the messenger or spokesman of the covenant law to Israel.<sup>2</sup> This is clearly no place to consider the concept of covenant and its many interpretations in OT scholarship.<sup>3</sup> There has been proposed, however, the theory that the pre-monarchic structure of Israel was a federation of twelve tribes organised as an amphictyony with

1. We have noted earlier (p.126) von Rad's tendency to call any prophetic function a prophetic office. This equation between office and function must clearly be avoided in any attempt to determine whether the canonical prophets held an official position with defined functions.
2. See above, pp.246-248.
3. See, e.g., McCarthy, OT Covenant. A Survey of Current Opinions.



its worship focused upon a central sanctuary.<sup>1</sup> It is this hypothesis which has led to the notion of a distinctive prophetic 'office' of 'law-speaker'. The suggestion is that in this early amphictyonic organisation there took place the public declaration of the covenant law<sup>2</sup> and the questions which follow are, what was the Sitz im Leben of this law-proclamation and who was its speaker? The Sitz im Leben, so it is argued by those who propound the theory,<sup>3</sup> is the cult, and in particular the occasion of the major Israelite festival when the covenant itself was recalled and reaffirmed. The speaker of the law will, therefore, be someone within the cult, i.e., a cultic official. The long-accepted answer to the question of who formulated and proclaimed the covenant law is, according to Kraus, Moses and the Levites,<sup>4</sup> and it is the idea of Moses as fundamentally a charismatic proclaimer of the law<sup>5</sup> which Kraus develops to give the prophetic office of law-speaker, or covenant-mediator.

1. See especially, Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels; The History of Israel, pp.85ff.
2. The suggestion is built up largely around the claim of Alt that covenant-mediators may be reflected in the list of minor judges in the OT (Jgs.10:3-5; 12:8-15) and that these minor judges had to do with preserving and proclaiming the apodictic law in Israel, 'The Origins of Israelite Law', Essays on OT History and Religion, pp.103ff.; cf. also Noth, 'Das Amt des "Richters Israels"', in Festschrift für Alfred Bertholet, pp.404-417.
3. Notably Alt, Kraus, and Noth. See, e.g., Kraus, Die prophetische Verkündigung des Rechts in Israel, (Th St, 51) p.20.
4. Kraus, *ibid.*, pp.6f.
5. As suggested by Volz, Mose, ein Beitrag zur Untersuchung über die Ursprünge der israelitischen Religion.

He deduces an aetiology of this office from the Deuteronomic description of Moses as the first in a succession of Prophets (Dt.18:9-22);<sup>1</sup> and seeks to show that the prophets regarded themselves as Moses' successors in fulfilling it. He argues from the links of the early prophets, e.g., Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, with the sanctuaries<sup>2</sup> and from the later prophetic preaching of justice and righteousness,<sup>3</sup> that the prophets proclaimed the word not just as free charismatics but also as cultic officials. It is interesting to note in passing that Kraus rejects the idea that office and charisma are in any way opposites. In the OT, he says, one can have a charismatic office. The office of a person is, in fact, the same as the charisma which he carries.<sup>4</sup>

Kraus's thesis is developed by Reventlow in the essay already mentioned.<sup>5</sup> Reventlow compares the prophetic formulas for receiving the word, e.g. וְיָדַר ה' אֵלַי לֵאמֹר, with the introductory formula to the priestly legislation, as found, for example in Lev.5:14,20; 6:12, and which, in his opinion, testifies to a Mosaic office of mediator of the law in the covenant festival.<sup>6</sup> The close correspondence between the form of the transmission-word in the process of the law of the covenant festival through the mediatory office of

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1. See section iv) below, where this passage will be discussed further.

2. Kraus, Die prophetische Verkündigung des Rechts in Israel, pp.23ff.

3. Ibid., pp.30ff.

4. Ibid., p.23. cf. above, pp.168ff.

5. Reventlow, in ZThK, 58, 1961; see above, p.247.

6. Ibid., pp.278f.

Moses and the transmission word through the office of the prophets, has, he argues, a significance for the definition of the nature of this office which cannot be overestimated. The prophet in his office occupies the same place as Moses in the covenant festival. Dt.18:15 contains, without doubt, an aetiological basis for the prophetic office.<sup>1</sup> There is, however, he argues, a difference between the office of Moses and the office of the prophets. The former is a static office. The proclamation of the divine law is bound to the divine place and to the covenant festival. The people come to the delivering of the law and not the delivery of the law to the people (see Dt.31:10). But the covenant God of Israel needs another instrument to make his will known in the places far from the Temple and the festival. This task of being God's messenger, of carrying his word to unwilling people constitutes the other mediatory office, the office of the prophets. Their activity in public life gives them a significance which the mediator of the law can never reach. It makes possible the wider proclamation of the law.<sup>2</sup> It is significant that Reventlow, whilst locating the origin and basis of this prophetic office within the cult, regards public life as the setting of the prophetic proclamation of the law.

Reventlow concludes that these investigations emphatically establish the official and cultic nature of prophecy, as distinct from the common idea of a free, institutionally independent, canonical prophecy, hostile to the cultic

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1. Ibid., pp.280,282.

2. Ibid., p.283.

institutions of Israel. Even the canonical prophets, he asserts, stand in a regulated office which shows the established procedure of the transmission of the word. This takes the stress off the individual personality in evaluating the prophetic message and puts it on their official character. These investigations illustrate, he argues, the true way of speaking of 'cult prophecy' in Israel. Behind this stands a distinctive concept of the cult. It is the cult as it appears in the covenant festival which has itself the closest relationship to the word and its proclamation.<sup>1</sup>

A major part of the argument for ascribing such a cultic office to the prophets is form-critical, in that it deduces this office from the use of certain 'cultic' forms in the prophetic literature.<sup>2</sup> The question of how strong this argument actually is will be taken up again in chapter four. Suffice it to note here, as was noted earlier, a) that a form need not always remain bound to its original Sitz im Leben and b) that it is not immediately clear which way the influence is working, nor is it always certain that it is a

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1. Ibid., p.284.

2. It is argued, for instance, that the prophetic proclamation of Yahweh's lawsuit (Gerichtsrede) was formulated upon a pattern developed in the cult, Würthwein, in ZThK, 49, 1952, pp.1ff., and in criticism of this see von Waldow, Der traditionsgeschichtliche Hintergrund der prophetischen Gerichtsreden, pp.9ff., who argues that the lawsuit form was modelled upon the procedures developed in ordinary civil courts and Hesse, in ZAW, 65, 1953, who contends that before the time of Amos the cultic proclamation of Yahweh's judgement upon offenders was directed against foreign nations.

case of influence and not one of a common inheritance.<sup>1</sup>

It has rightly been said that the case for the hypothesis of a prophetic office connected with that of an amphictyonic<sup>2</sup> covenant-mediator stands or falls with the interpretation of Dt.18:15ff.<sup>3</sup> This will be considered below, but a few observations can be made in advance. Kraus's idea of an office of covenant-mediator and its takeover by the prophet is not supported from any information other than Dt.18. As Clements puts it, 'Whether such a covenant-mediator ever existed, and what precisely his functions may have been, is far from being clearly attested in the Old Testament'; nor do we possess any adequately clear picture of the Israelite tribal federation 'which would enable us to identify the work of the great prophets with any one of them'.<sup>4</sup> Clearly the subject is large and complex, but there are two other arguments against the view that the prophets held an office as spokesmen of the covenant law which must be touched on before leaving the subject.

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1. See above, pp.225ff., and see, e.g., Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, p.11, where he says that it is difficult to assess to what extent particular forms and motifs are peculiar to one context and not simply part of a much wider and widely used stock of religious ideas and forms. What we have may, he says, be merely fortuitous instances of the use of a common tradition of material.
  2. The idea of the amphictyony has itself, of course, come under sharp criticism by, e.g., Fohrer, 'Altes Testament - "Amphiktyonie" und "Bund"?', Studien zur alttestamentlichen Theologie und Geschichte, pp.84-119; G.W. Anderson, 'Israel: Amphictyony: 'AM; KAHAL; 'EDAH', in Translating and Understanding the OT, pp.135-151; and Mayes, 'Israel in the Pre-monarchy Period', VT, 22, 1973, pp.151-170.
  3. By Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, p.12.
  4. *Ibid.*, p.14.



Firstly, it is by no means unanimously agreed that such an office, if it existed, would fall more naturally to the prophet than to the priest. This question is considered by P.J. Budd in the section of his article on priestly instruction entitled 'priestly proclamation'.<sup>1</sup> This proclamation is, he says, of general principles rather than direction for specific situations. Clues to its content are given by Dt.27:14-26. In form it has the marks of apodictic law, of which the curses of Dt.27:14-26 seem to have all the essential elements: a note of absolute demand, strong prohibition, and the brief but direct mode of address. The life-setting of this proclamation is some kind of cultic assembly and it probably had its primary setting in some kind of ceremony of covenant renewal. Thus far he is in agreement with Kraus. The argument beyond this point, however, is, according to Budd, largely conjectural. He admits that the idea of a 'law-speaker' would account for the place of the great individual figures within the covenant traditions, men such as Moses, Joshua, and Samuel; but, he says, the oldest traditions make no deliberate attempt to make them either 'priest' or 'prophet'. The idea of a prophetic rôle in proclamation<sup>2</sup> has some support in Jgs.6:7-10 and there is also the strong post-exilic conviction that law was first promulgated through prophetic revelation (e.g. 2 Kgs.17:13;

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1. Budd, op.cit., pp.8-11.

2. As propounded, e.g., by Kraus, Worship in Israel, pp.101ff.

Zech.7:9-12; Ezra 9:10f.; 2 Chr.29:25; Dan.9:10). Nevertheless, Budd argues, there is the persistent testimony of Dt. 27:14 which insists that Levites were responsible for the declaration of such laws.<sup>1</sup> Moreover the rôle of covenant-spokesman does not fit very readily what is known of primitive prophecy. The setting of proclamation is the sanctuary in the context of communal gatherings, yet, he says, the kind of prophecy that has closest links with the holy places-ecstatic, spirit prophecy - seems to have least affinity with the content and concerns of proclamation. 'The prophetic "word" is essentially a ministry to a specific situation whereas the proclamation "word" is the assertion of binding principles in a cultic context'. It is true, he continues, that any genuine Yahwist - be he chieftain, leader, man of God, or Levite would be concerned with the essential principles of proclamation; hence, the occasional ministry referred to in Jgs. 7:7-10, but the regular proclamation, in the context of a regular gathering, would, he thinks, in all probability be the duty of the Levites. There is no real evidence that northern prophetic circles engaged in this activity<sup>2</sup> and it is, in his opinion, going too far to assert that the law of the prophet (Dt.18:15-22) establishes a cultic rôle. 'The post-exilic witness to a prophetic initiative is readily explained as a characteristic reinterpretation of Moses and Torah in prophetic terms'.

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1. It may be remarked, however, that there is surely a difference between the initial disclosure or revelation of the laws and the subsequent proclamation of them.

2. cf. Nicholson, Deuteronomy and Tradition, pp.73ff.

There is a further factor which militates against the notion of a prophetic office of law-speaker and this lies in the nature of the proclamation of the law as seen in the prophetic literature. Many scholars agree that the prophets were vitally concerned with the covenant law and yet reject the idea that this was in any official, cultic capacity, and this because the prophets not only proclaimed the law but in their proclamation reinterpreted it. The suggestion is rather that the law was not being effectively made known through the normal institutions and officials of the covenant and that the prophets, therefore, felt themselves charged with a kind of officium extra ordinem.<sup>1</sup> This is maintained, for instance, by Clements, who writes, '...we must argue for the distinctiveness of the prophetic vocation, as it was represented in the canonical prophets, from the office of the covenant "law-speaker", on the grounds of the radical interpretation of the law, which the prophets made'.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, von Rad says that the distinctive feature of the prophetic preaching of the law was the application of the law of Israel to the world, but that the prophets were even more distinctive for 'the radical nature of this preaching of the law...'.<sup>3</sup> What they gave was, he says, a 'bold reinterpretation of the old ordinance, which can only be understood charismatically'.<sup>4</sup> The relation of the prophets

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1. See, e.g., Porteous, 'The Prophets and the Problem of Continuity', in Israel's Prophetic Heritage, pp.12ff., 24f. See also, above, p.163, etc.

2. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, p.81.

3. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.415.

4. Ibid., p.414.

to tradition and the degree of newness and radicality in their proclamation constitute a huge subject within which there is room for wide divergence of opinion.<sup>1</sup> How far the prophets were spokesmen of tradition and how far they represented a new or rebel element with a unique and supreme authority will arise again in connection with the prophet's call and inspiration. So far as the fundamental question of the possibility of a prophetic office of spokesman is concerned, however, there are two things which can clearly be said. Firstly, as we saw with the idea of the prophet as messenger, it is obvious that the prophets were regarded by others and conceived of themselves as the spokesmen of Yahweh. The word and its proclamation was their central concern and function. To this extent, it is at least feasible that if they claimed a particular 'office' it was that of spokesmen of Yahweh. It would seem, however, that they had no institutional position by which to authorise their message<sup>2</sup> and to this extent they lacked an office, in the sense of an institutional position with a recognised function and a recognised authority. Secondly, on the narrower and precise definition of the office of spokesman as the law-speaker or covenant-mediator, there is no clear evidence of such an office, let alone of the prophets' having held it. Nor, if there were such an office, does it seem possible to fit the canonical prophets into it.

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1. See, e.g., The Law and the Prophets, pp.64f., where he takes issue with von Rad's assessment, whilst still arguing a distinctiveness in the prophetic proclamation of the law.

2. See below, ch.IV, e.g., p.494.

d) Intercessor

It was stated in the introduction to the chapter that its aim is to examine the various functions ascribed to the prophets and to decide whether or not these constitute an 'office'. Whilst it is almost certainly a mistake to collect all these functions and to concoct from them one uniform prophetic office, as if all the prophets performed all these functions, it can fairly be said that there are certain functions which form a feature in the ministry of a number, if not all, of the prophets, and their recurrence leads one to believe that they were, in fact, recognised elements in the prophetic 'office'. Whether or not intercession is one of these functions will now be discussed.

Intercession is important in considering the subject of prophetic office, not only because references to it occur in a number of the prophetic books, but also because, of all the prophetic functions, it involves, to a unique degree, the two sides of the prophet's position.<sup>1</sup> By its very nature, intercession involves both God and men, and the prophet, as intercessor, must stand in relation to both.

As will be shown, there is considerable evidence that the canonical prophets interceded (e.g. Am.7:2ff.), but intercession is particularly prominent in Jeremiah. It is necessary to examine the references to intercession by prophetic figures and to see how far intercession is a prophetic function. Whilst some attention will be given to Amos who furnishes a clear example of a prophet who inter-

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1. cf. below, ch.V.



cedes, this discussion will be largely confined to Jeremiah.

One of the chief considerations concerns the basis of Jeremiah's intercession. Did it spring, for instance, from a particular feeling of solidarity or sympathy with his people on Jeremiah's part or had it a less subjective basis?

The subject of prayer in Jeremiah will be looked at again in relation to the 'Confessions',<sup>1</sup> but it needs also to be considered here, as intercession is plainly a part of prayer. Some mention must, therefore, be made of the nature of prayer in the OT and more detailed attention given to the terms used for intercession and their meaning. In Jeremiah particularly, we are confronted with the question of whether prayer is primarily public or private, individual or communal and the question of who offers prayer needs to be asked. The relation between prophets and priests, upon which this touches, cannot be taken up in detail here, but it takes us back to the questions which arose earlier in connection with the Psalms.

There is also the issue of the relation of prayer and intercession to the word of God. Again, the importance of the word in Jeremiah demands separate treatment, but it is important here in deciding just how technical a term intercession is in the OT and in considering what the intercession is for.

Thus, there are a number of subjects which impinge upon this, but this discussion will restrict itself in the main

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1. See ch.IV. The 'Confessions' are obviously closely linked to this subject, not only because they are often viewed as prayer, but also because they concern the prophet's position in relation to God and men. They are of great importance for Jeremiah's prophetic office.

to intercession in Jeremiah. The main questions to be asked are i) from the references to intercession in the OT and, in particular, in Jeremiah, is there any evidence of an intercessory office and if so, is there any evidence that this office was distinctively prophetic, and ii) what evidence is there that Jeremiah considered intercession to be part of the prophetic 'office' or, at any rate, of his prophetic 'office'?

Before anything can be said about intercession in Jeremiah, it is obvious that the terms used for intercession, both in Jeremiah and elsewhere, must be discussed. Concerning the first of the two verbs used, **נָחַץ**, there is debate both as to its original significance and as to what it came to mean in the OT. There are two main opinions about its original significance.<sup>1</sup> It is suggested that it is related to the Arabic falla and means 'to notch the edge of a sword'. So, following Wellhausen, many have taken **נָחַץ** in the hithpa'el to refer to the custom of gashing oneself with swords or knives until the deity answers (see 1 Kgs.18:28, although this verb is not used there, and 1 Kgs.20:41; Zech.13:6 for evidence of the same practice among the prophets). But, it is clear from its occurrences (e.g. Dt.9:20) that if 'to perform ritual incision' is the original meaning of the hithpa'el, it has been completely lost from biblical Hebrew.

Alternatively, it has been suggested that **נָחַץ** and **נָחַץ**

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1. Ap-Thomas, 'Notes on some terms relating to prayer', VT, 6, 1956, pp.230-238.

are developments of the same bilateral stem meaning 'to fall'.<sup>1</sup> From this the meanings 'to cast oneself down' and then 'to pray' could be derived, making the verb almost a synonym for  $\text{הִתְפַּלֵּל}$ , meaning 'to worship' in general. The verb occurs, however, not only in the hithpa'el, but also in the pi'el and there is considerable disagreement about the relation between the two verbal forms.<sup>2</sup> BDB gives 'intercede, interpose' as the ground meaning of  $\text{פָּלַל}$  and a development to 'mediate, judge' for the pi'el and 'intercede, pray' for the hithpa'el;<sup>3</sup> but there is no complete agreement as to what the pi'el and hithpa'el forms really mean. In discussing the question, Ap-Thomas concerns himself with the opposed views of Johansson and de Boer.

The former posits a juridical basis for the hithpa'el and follows Gunkel's view that it was a technical term for intercessory praying.<sup>4</sup> He thinks that the hithpa'el was developed from the pi'el, meaning 'to judge, decide, make oneself an arbitrator' and thus meant 'to come forward on a person's behalf' and then 'to ask for someone' in general.

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1. Ahrens, 'Der Stamm der schwachen Verba in den semitischen Sprachen', ZDMG, 64, 1910, p.163.

2. Ap-Thomas, op.cit.

3. cf. Briggs, Psalms, p.XXI. Blank, 'The Confessions of Jeremiah and the Meaning of Prayer', HUCA, 21, 1948, pp.337f., note 12, stresses the association of  $\text{פָּלַל}$  and  $\text{הִתְפַּלֵּל}$  with judging and deciding in the law courts. After some discussion, he conjectures that the verb  $\text{הִתְפַּלֵּל}$  means first 'to defend oneself' (before the judge) and then 'to intercede for another, to speak in his defence'. He cites Goldziher and Battenwieser. He adds that the variety of meanings attaching to the reflexive verb and the noun in the Bible makes it clear that it soon developed the general significance of 'to pray' and 'prayer', whatever their etymology may be.

4. Johansson, Parakletoi, p.43.

Johannson also stresses that the verb signifies intervention by the mediator and that most often this is between the object of prayer and God. de Boer, on the other hand, argues that the hithpa'el is used of types of prayer other than purely intercessory prayer.<sup>1</sup> He does not think that the hithpa'el was developed from the pi'el and he believes that a mediator or arbitrator always acts for both parties. Their disagreement over the juridical basis of פלל is demonstrated in their respective translations of 1 Sam.2:25:-  
 אִם - יִחַטֵּא אִישׁ לְאִישׁ וּפָלְלוּ אֱלֹהִים וְאִם לַיהוָה יִחַטֵּא - אִישׁ  
 פלל . . . . . Johansson translates, 'If a man sin against another, God can decide the affair, but if a man sin against Yahweh, who can then come forward as arbitrator?'. de Boer translates, 'If anyone sin against another, 'ēlohim acts as mediator, and if anyone sin against Yahweh, who will make intercession for him?'. Ap-Thomas points out the importance of de Boer's assertion that פלל means 'to act as mediator'.<sup>2</sup> de Boer derives this meaning, he says, mainly from Ps.106:28-31, where Phinehas is said to have 'interposed'. This is not, de Boer claims, an affair of juridical 'judging', but of acting in a decisive manner with a specific result.

Ap-Thomas himself inclines to the meaning 'to break' or 'to cut off' as providing the best hypothesis for explaining the development of the various forms derived from the root.<sup>3</sup>

1. de Boer, 'De Voorbede in het Oude Testament', OTS, III, 1943, pp.124f.
2. Ap-Thomas, op.cit., p.236. He refers also to S.R.Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel, p.35, who also accepts 'to mediate' as the meaning of the pi'el.
3. Ibid., pp.238ff.

He compares the meaning of the pi'el with the meaning of the English verb 'decide', meaning 'to cut, divide, put on one side, compare one with another, distinguish, discriminate, pass a judgement'. He says that S.R. Driver brings out the connection between the pi'el and hithpa'el with regard to 1 Sam.2:25 by translating, 'If a man sinneth against a man, God will mediate (for him); but if a man sin against Yahweh, who can intercede for him?'. Driver defines the hithpa'el of 𐤇𐤇𐤁 as 'to interpose as mediator', specially by means of entreaty (e.g. Gen.20:17).

Although in the OT the hithpa'el comes to be as neutral in meaning as the verb 'to pray', the fact remains that 25 of its 60 occurrences are intercessory. de Boer writes, 'In agreement with the basic meaning of the stem, we can assign a more precise definition: a) make oneself an averter of God's (punitive) power...and b) ask for oneself diversion (thereof), reconciliation, seek the restoration or the possibility of life by stopping God's endangering intervention...'.<sup>1</sup>

de Boer's contention raises an important question about the attitude and the view of prayer that lie behind intercessory prayer in the OT. Ap-Thomas makes the point that prayer, unlike a magical spell, depends absolutely on the sovereign good pleasure of the deity.<sup>1</sup> He defines prayer as 'a request to God with regard to a specific unsatisfactory state of affairs affecting the pray-er, which has

1. Ap-Thomas, op.cit., p.228 and 'Some Notes on the OT Attitude to Prayer', SJT, 9, 1956, pp.422ff. Contrast Johnson, in Exp T, 49, 1935, 6, e.g. pp.315f.



been caused by, and so is remediable by Yahweh, at his discretion'. It follows from this that intercession in the OT is not regarded as a potent spell, having power over Yahweh and securing men's ends, irrespective of whether they correspond to Yahweh's intentions. Yet, at the same time, intercession is a powerful force, effective in relation to Yahweh's will. Intercession is essentially prayer on behalf of someone else and from examples such as 1 Sam.12:23 it is clear that the ideas of averting punishment and securing forgiveness are present.

Before leaving Ap-Thomas' general comments about prayer in the OT, it is significant to note what he says about the people who offer prayer. The fact that prayer was offered by Jonah, the prophet, and by David, the King, suggests that these pray-ers might be regarded as being allowed special privileges in virtue of their office; but prayer could also be offered by laymen, Abraham's servant, for example (Gen.24:12-14) and Hannah (1 Sam.1:10-18). Similarly, although prayer by the experts, particularly the priests, would be offered at the sanctuary, 'the Psalter is full of prayers uttered extempore just where the need has overtaken the sufferer'.<sup>1</sup>

The other word used for intercession in the OT is  $\text{אלג}$ . It has, in the qal, numerous meanings, related to the basic sense 'to meet, encounter, reach', but one of these, particularly in conjunction with  $\text{ל}$ , is 'to encounter with

1. Ap-Thomas, in SJT, 9, 1956, p.427. This begs the question, were the Psalms uttered extempore by sufferers at the moment of need? As we have seen, Mowinckel contends that these prayers were not always extempore, and, more important here, were uttered by a cultic official. See above, p.186.

request, i.e. entreat' (e.g. Jer.7:16). Thus, in the hiph'il, it can mean 'to cause to entreat' (e.g. Jer.15:11) and 'to make entreaty' (e.g. Jer.36:25). In this case, the verb is usually followed by the preposition ל, whilst in its more general sense of interpose, נִלְוֶה takes אִתּוֹ with the person on whose behalf the intervention is made (e.g. Isa.53:12).

Whilst, as already mentioned, it is true that prayer in the OT is not the prerogative of experts, whether they be prophets, priests, or kings, the fact remains that there are numerous references which suggest that prayer, and particularly intercession, was expected of prophets. Intercession, says Lindblom, was the function of men who occupied a special position in relation to God and the prophets were the intercessors par excellence.<sup>1</sup> Before this can be accepted, attention needs to be given to the examples which Lindblom offers and to other passages, in which prophetic figures are expressly said to have functioned as intercessors. A helpful, if somewhat one-sided, discussion of these is offered by H.W. Hertzberg.<sup>2</sup> He admits at the outset that to deny that the prophets were intercessors is today to swim against the stream; but perhaps his study is all the more useful for doing just that. His main question is whether or not the prophets, both early and canonical, intercede as prophets or simply as men of God.

The first and most obvious reference to be considered

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1. Lindblom, PAI, pp.204f.

2. Hertzberg, 'Sind die Propheten Fürbitter?', in Tradition und Situation.

is Gen.20:7, where Abraham, in his capacity as a nabi, is recognised as having the competence for intercession.

Hertzberg rightly says that it must be asked here whether to use this text with regard to the problem of prophetic intercession is not to attach too great a weight to the word nabi. He goes on to say that the important place for an intercessory appearance of Abraham is Gen.18:23ff., where intercession is based on no such term, but only on Abraham's special place in the salvation-history.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Isaac appears as intercessor without being called nabi (Gen.25:21). He cites Ps.105:15 as further testimony to the fact that nabi is used of the patriarchs in a loose sense, meaning simply man of God.<sup>2</sup>

A much less clear reference in the Psalms is introduced in relation to the appearance of Moses and Aaron as intercessors. The meaning of the reference in the context of Jeremiah (15:1) will be mentioned later, but Hertzberg is here concerned to decide in what capacity Moses and Aaron appear in Ps.99:6. He contends that the point in Ps.99 is that intercession is made by priests. The Psalm, together with Joel 2:17 where priests are also presented as interceding, is, he claims, post-exilic and in early traditions it is Moses who is the intercessor. He believes that this is shown by the fact that although, in Ex.8:4,24; 9:27f.; 10:16f. (עֲתָרָה), we have the request of Pharaoh for the

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1. Ibid., pp.63f.; cf. Jepsen, Nabi, p.115, where he states that nabi, in Gen.20:7, is not a technical term. Reventlow, by contrast, thinks that Abraham intercedes for Sodom as a prophetic functionary, Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos, p.34.

2. cf. A.A. Anderson, op.cit., II, p.730, and Lindblom, PAI, p.96.

intercession of Moses and Aaron it is always Moses who executes the request.

It is to be noted that Ps.99 is unique in the OT in actually giving Moses the title of priest. Gray asserts that it does not represent a historical reality and that the conception of Moses as priest is much less familiar than that of Moses the law-giver and Moses the prophet.<sup>1</sup> The point that Hertzberg is at pains to make, however, is that it is not in his prophetic capacity that Moses appears as intercessor. He refers to Ex.32:30ff.(  $\sqrt{\text{כפר}}$  ); Num.11:2 (  $\sqrt{\text{ללן}}$  ); 12:13 (  $\sqrt{\text{פער}}$  ); 21:7 (  $\sqrt{\text{ללן}}$  ) and says that in none of these places is Moses described as a prophet. He is simply a great man of God. Because of his relationship to God, he naturally has special access to him and is, therefore, regarded as an intercessor.

He makes a similar point in connection with Samuel. Samuel is pictured as a prophet in 1 Sam.3:20, but, he claims, it is noticeable that the stress here is on Yahweh's word (1 Sam.3:1). Similarly, in 1 Sam.9, where Samuel appears

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1. Gray, op.cit., p.194. It should be noted that the interpretation of Ps.99:6 is disputed. Kirkpatrick, Bentzen, and Mowinckel all take the view that the reference is to priests, interceding in the present. Moffatt's translation significantly suggests that 'to call on God' is not necessarily 'to intercede', but simply to worship, to invoke the name of God, 'His priests have still a Moses and an Aaron, his worshippers have still a Samuel; and the Eternal answers when they call on him'. Other interpretations are mentioned by A.A. Anderson, who himself inclines to regarding the verse as an historical retrospect of Israel's relationship with God, with Moses and Aaron as representatives of the priests and Samuel as the type of the prophets, all interceding. This is supported, he thinks, by other references to intercession by Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, op.cit., II, pp.696f.

as a man of God (v.6) and as a seer (v.9), there is no mention of his being an intercessor. It is in chapter 7 that intercession is clearly involved (vv.5,8,9 פָּדָה ). His connection with the sanctuary and sacrifice gives the impression that Samuel is functioning as a priest and this is in no way denied by the fact that the term priest does not occur. More important, he says, are the beginning and the end of this narrative (vv.6,15,17). In v.8, the hiph'il of נָצַח (to save) and in vv.3,14, the hiph'il of נָצַח (to rescue) are used. Thus, he says, the activity of praying and saving belong together.<sup>1</sup> In the concluding verses, Samuel's activity is that of judging (שָׁפַט), As judge, he is here a man of God and so capable of intercession. Again, in 1 Sam.12:19, intercession is linked with the office of judge. Thus Hertzberg concludes, so far as Samuel is concerned, intercession is in no way connected with his being a prophet.<sup>2</sup>

In regard to the next passage that Hertzberg uses, he is less successful in getting rid of the link between prophecy

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1. This is surely an inaccurate statement by Hertzberg. On the presentation of Samuel and his activity, cf. ch.II, pp. 57ff.
  2. Hertzberg, in Tradition und Situation, pp.65f., cf. his commentary, 1 and 2 Samuel, p.68, where he stresses Samuel's priestly rôle. The general interpretation of Ps.99:6 also, of course, supports the view that Samuel, in invoking God, is acting as a priest. Hertzberg also cites Dt.21:1-9 and Job 42:8 as instances where intercession is linked with sacrifice. It is interesting to notice that in his treatment of the passages where Moses and Samuel are shown to intercede, Macholz's point is that it is precisely as prophets that they engage in this activity, but that נָצַח is used here to mean 'to intercede' not in any strict sense but to seek Yahweh's direction and help, 'Jeremia in der Kontinuität der Prophetie', in Probleme Biblischer Theologie, pp.328f.



and intercession. This is Isa.53:12, where, he claims, no significance is to be attached to the prophetic position of the Servant.<sup>1</sup> It is not clear whether Hertzberg is opposing the view that the Servant is a prophetic figure, in which case there is a barrage of opinion against him, or whether he is just refusing to attach any particular significance to the use of the term  $\text{נָאֵד}$  in connection with the Servant. If the latter is the case, he ought surely to relate v.12 to the rest of the song, especially vv.4-6, where, it could be urged, the Servant's intercession is described. Hertzberg's case could perhaps be made on grounds other than those he offers. It could, for instance, be argued that  $\text{נָאֵד}$ , in v.12c does not mean that the Servant interceded in the sense of making intercessory prayer. Thus, C.R. North, whilst acknowledging that  $\text{נָאֵד}$  in both the qal and the hiph'il can mean 'to intercede', translates, 'by bearing the sin of many and standing in the place of the transgressors'. He says that 'in the present context and in the light of Isa.59:16, "there is no-one to intervene", the figure is of the Servant placing himself between the transgressors and the punishment they deserved'.<sup>2</sup> This interpretation is convincing, and thus the passage is not persuasive evidence that intercessory prayer was offered by a prophet.

Hertzberg mentions briefly the references to intercessory activity in the ministries of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kgs.17:18,

1. Ibid., p.67, against Hesse, Die Fürbitte im Alten Testament, p.58.
2. North, The Second Isaiah, p.246; cf. Duhm, Das Buch Jesaja, p.367. Here AV, RV, and RSV render 'and make intercession' and NEB 'interceded'.

20f.  $\sqrt{2} \gamma p$  ; 2 Kgs.4:33f.  $\sqrt{2} \gamma \gamma$  ). Again, he says, it is as men of God and not as prophets that they are asked to intercede. Even in 2 Kgs.5, where the term  $\times' \gamma \gamma$  is used, its meaning is simply man of God. It is used by a foreigner and is in no way technical. Furthermore, he says, the references are more to magical acts designed to secure God's help than to intercession. Whilst both the points he makes here are valid though the argument about the use of  $\times' \gamma \gamma$  is rather strained, it must be admitted that it is difficult to press a distinction between intercession as found in the other passages which he mentions and in the passages in the canonical prophets which he then goes on to consider, and magical acts designed to secure God's help. If there is a difference, it surely lies in the presentation of these prophets and especially Elisha as miracle-workers and not in the OT view of prayer. After all, all prayer as potent word is open to the charge of resting on the idea of magic, as potent word and potent action.

The references to intercession in the canonical prophets which he discusses are in Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

The issues raised by the vision reports in Am.7:1-8:3 are complex, and the whole question of the nature and purpose of the visions need not be considered in detail here.<sup>1</sup> One aspect of this, however, which does affect the enquiry into intercession and the prophets is the relationship between the four visions here recorded, for it is striking that intercession

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1. See below, ch.V, pp.560-569, where this will be discussed in connection with the narrative in Am.7:10-17.

is present in the first two visions (Am.7:1-3,4-6) whilst absent in the second two (Am.7:7-9; 8:1-3), the implication being that by the time of the second two visions intercession is no longer possible. This division between the two pairs of visions is particularly emphasised by Weiser.<sup>1</sup> He argues that the visions are related to Amos's call to be a prophet,<sup>2</sup> and that we see between the second and third visions a vital development in the prophet's understanding of Yahweh's judgement.<sup>3</sup> He maintains that the contents of the visions show the inner development of Amos to be a pure prophet of woe, that what they reflect is not a change in the behaviour of God but in the prophet's experience and understanding of God. In Weiser's opinion, pure woe is the nature of the whole prophetic proclamation of Amos and, therefore, he believes that the visions in which there is the possibility of intercession must come from the time before his prophetic call.<sup>4</sup>

Against this interpretation is the fact that there is nothing to suggest such a momentous occurrence between the second and third visions, and it seems likely that in the first two visions Amos is already a prophet. Indeed, it is argued that in the intercessions of these visions Amos is exercising a true prophetic function.<sup>5</sup> The argument is then

1. Weiser, Die Prophetie des Amos.

2. Ibid., p.69.

3. Ibid., p.73.

4. cf. Rudolph, who also thinks that the visions come before the prophet's call, Imago dei, p.25.

5. So Herntrich, Christentum und Wissenschaft, p.168; cf. de Boer, in OTS, III, 1943, p.157, where he says that only someone called by God can intercede.

that if, in the first two visions, Amos is exercising the intercessory function of the prophet, then he actually is a prophet.

The difficulty in Weiser's interpretation has been recognised by Würthwein, who refuses the thesis that the visionary experiences of Amos antecede his call.<sup>1</sup> He agrees with Weiser, however, in seeing a shift in Amos's understanding of God and in Amos's activity during the course of the visionary experiences.<sup>2</sup> His contention is that this shift evidences two distinct phases in Amos's career. In the first phase, Amos acts as a nabi, that is, according to Würthwein, a prophet whose office is purely one of weal. An integral part of this office is the intercession, which we see being exercised in the first two visions, and proclaiming woe is no part of this office. Then, in the second phase, Amos departs from this official prophecy to being a prophet of woe, as we see him in the second two visions. So Würthwein thinks that the significance of the visions is that they show the development from the nabi to the prophet of woe. All the visions lie after his call to be a nabi and so in the first two he exercises the nabiamt of intercession, but he then receives a personal call to proclaim woe, and intercession is no longer part of his office.

It is worth noting that Würthwein links the notion of a nabiamt and its intercessory function with the cultic sphere.

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1. Würthwein, in ZAW, 62/63, 1949/51.

2. Ibid., p.29.

It is in this sphere, he says, that the nabi holds his office.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Watts contends that the intercessory function belonged to Yahwistic ritual and festival. He regards it as a major function of the cult prophet.<sup>2</sup> If this is true, then it lends some support to Mowinckel's arguments about the evidence of cult prophecy in the Psalms; but we have yet to enquire whether this function was, in fact, exclusively or even primarily exercised within the cult.

It emerges from this that both Weiser and Würthwein do not consider intercession to be a part of the true prophetic function. This is strenuously opposed by Reventlow, who rejects this view on the ground that it misunderstands the nature of the prophetic office.<sup>3</sup> He argues that in all the visions Amos appears in the full function of this prophetic office, in both his reception of God's threat and in his coming forward on behalf of his people in intercession. He writes, 'Das Prophetenamt ist Mittleramt in doppelter Richtung'.<sup>4</sup> He stresses that the visions are, in fact, part of the prophetic proclamation.<sup>5</sup> They do not lie outside the prophetic office, but belong to it and this office is

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1. Ibid., p.31, where he adds that the extent of the judgement which Amos is later commissioned to proclaim excludes him from this office, since this would be unthinkable in the cult.

2. Watts, Vision and Prophecy in Amos, p.20.

3. Reventlow, Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos, p.35.

4. Ibid., p.36.

5. Ibid., p.43. See also Mays, op.cit., p.125, where he says that the visions serve the same function as the oracles, viz., they testify to the revelations of Yahweh, to his decisions concerning Amos's audience. 'The purpose of this special proclamation is', he writes, 'the vindication of the proclamation itself'. See further, ch.V, pp.56lff.



one of mediation.

It is with this point of view that Hertzberg takes issue. It cannot be shown, he argues, that intercession is self-evidently a part of the prophetic 'office'.<sup>1</sup> Amos intercedes simply as a man of God, amongst other men of God who may also intercede.<sup>2</sup> As a prophet, he, like the other canonical prophets, appears not as an intercessor, but as a proclaimer of God's word.<sup>3</sup>

Hertzberg makes the same point in relation to Isaiah. It is reported that Hezekiah asks the prophet to pray during the Assyrian threat (2 Kgs.19:4; Isa.37:4 נִפְלֵה אֲשֶׁר ). But it is obvious from Isaiah's reply (vv.6f.), he claims, that the narrator clearly understood the task of the prophet to be to speak the word of God. Thus, proclamation rather than intercession is the prophet's function.<sup>4</sup> This is surely to go too far, however, for even if the passages state what Isaiah said on this occasion, this in no way proves that he might not have interceded on other occasions.

Although the Jeremiah passages are to be looked at later, two of them must be mentioned at this point because in them Hertzberg finds further evidence that the peculiar task of the prophet is the reception and transmission of the word.

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1. Hertzberg, in Tradition und Situation, p.69.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.71.

4. cf. Bright, 'Jeremiah's Complaints: Liturgy, or Expressions of Personal Distress?', in Proclamation and Presence, p.194, where he comments that whilst Isaiah is asked to pray, the narrative says nothing of Isaiah's actually doing so. He adds, however, that it is not excluded that Isaiah did intercede for the people, even though the narrator says nothing about it.

The passages are Jer.37:1ff and 42:1ff. Hertzberg maintains that in ch.37, v.17 shows that the king is expecting the word in answer to Jeremiah's intercessions (v.3). Thus, he says, the prophetic task of conveying the word remains clearly recognisable. It should be noted, however, that there are two distinct elements of prophetic activity referred to in this passage. In v.3, the king's request is that Jeremiah should pray (  $\text{וַיַּחַן}$  ) for them, whilst v.7 speaks of the king's inquiry (  $\text{וַיִּשְׁאֶל}$  ) of the prophet. The sequel to v.7 is v.17 in which the king asks, 'Is there any word from the Lord?'. Jeremiah's reply is the oracle given in answer to the king's inquiry.<sup>1</sup> Can it then be claimed that the word is the answer to the prophet's prayer?

Reventlow recognises this distinction but he draws from it different and somewhat startling conclusions. Because he raises what is here an important factor for determining whether or not the canonical prophets are regarded as intercessors, the main points of this treatment of Jer.37:1ff, and the comparable passage in Jer.42:1ff, should be given here rather than reserved till the other Jeremianic passages are dealt with.<sup>2</sup>

There are, Reventlow affirms, two parts to the request

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1. It may be noted in passing that it has recently been suggested that the prophets in Israel acted as officially recognised diviners and that the use of the expression  $\text{וַיִּשְׁאֶל וַיַּחַן}$  evidences an institutionalised function. So Lust, 'The Mantic Function of the Prophet', Bijdragen, 34, 1973, pp.234-250. It is interesting that Lust thinks that this prophetic function was not connected with the cult.
  2. Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia, pp.143-148.

in ch.37, one for intercession (v.3) and the other for information through a word from Yahweh (v.7). Instead of drawing the two obvious conclusions from this juxtaposition, i.e. either that <sup>ל</sup><sub>ל</sub><sup>ו</sup> is used loosely in v.3 to mean inquiry or that the prophet is being referred to in one section as intercessor whilst in the other he is proclaimer of the word, Reventlow argues that the two elements are clearly linked. It is plain from v.7 (especially <sup>ל</sup><sub>ל</sub><sup>ו</sup> <sup>ו</sup><sub>ו</sub><sup>ו</sup>), he says, that Jeremiah knows that the point of the request for intercession is the expectation of the word of Yahweh and it is interesting that Yahweh's word takes the form of a word of judgement (vv.7ff.), whilst the request in v.3 is for intercession. It is natural in the institutional realm, he argues, that the request of the king for intervention should be met by a reply from Yahweh. This reply is in answer to the intercessory appearance of the prophet. Intercession, he continues, for the word of Yahweh forms an established component of a ritual. If a man expects or hopes for a word from Yahweh, he goes by way of the official institution of the prophetic office (cf. 2 Kgs.19). The propitious answer of Yahweh, the salvation-oracle, naturally constitutes the usual form of the ritual; but here, as in Jer.4:11ff., this is not possible and a woe-oracle is delivered. He deduces from this that the prophetic proclamation of woe belongs characteristically to the cultic realm.<sup>1</sup> It is to be objected that the prophetic proclamation

1. With this may be compared the treatment of Jer.37:3ff. and 42:1ff. given by Macholz. In 37:3ff., he says, the request for intercession ( <sup>ו</sup><sub>ו</sub><sup>ו</sup> - <sup>ו</sup><sub>ו</sub><sup>ו</sup> ) is parallel with the request for an oracle ( <sup>ו</sup><sub>ו</sub><sup>ו</sup> ). The answer which is received is then the reply to the request for an oracle  
(Contd.)

of woe in this context shows no such thing. It only shows that intercession, if it is to be linked with the word at all, as seems probable, is not always an attempt to twist God's arm into sending weal. As usual, Reventlow sets the issue in a cultic framework with no justification and then proceeds to invent a suitable ritual to explain his interpretation. However, his assertion at this point that Jeremiah and his contemporaries regard intercession as a natural task of the prophet is sensible.

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Contd.) not to the intercession. It is not, however, that Jeremiah is being asked to do two distinct things, to intercede, and to seek for an oracle (as is maintained by Rudolph, Jeremia, p.237 and others). Rather וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה here means to seek for an oracle and not to make intercession (op.cit., pp.314f.). He comes to the same conclusion for the meaning of וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה in Jer.42:1ff. (pp.315ff.). He also links this activity with the cult and thinks it has to do with the prophetic activity of seeking a favourable oracle (pp.320ff.). On this, see below, pp.293-295. Bright's view is that in 37:3-10 Jeremiah is asked to 'enquire' of Yahweh for a word and he returns a word. We may assume that the prophet did pray, but the narrative says nothing of it. Similarly, in 42, Jeremiah replies that he will pray (v.4). The content of the prayer is not given, but, although we may assume that it included intercession, the wording of v.4 indicates that we are intended to see it primarily as a prayer for a word from God which was ultimately received. Bright argues against Reventlow's belief in an office of intercession. There is nothing in the narratives, he says, to suggest ritual intercession carried out in a cultic context. 'The fact that the word was received only after ten days (v.7) makes it unlikely in the extreme. Here, as elsewhere, the specifically prophetic function is to receive and transmit the divine word' (in Proclamation and Presence, p.195). Bright gives examples of where intercession has a cultic setting (e.g. Joshua 7:6-9), but he argues that if the making of cultic intercession was an integral part of the prophetic office, it is remarkable that the narrative texts of the OT do not provide us with clear and frequent examples of prophets discharging this function (pp.193f.).

He mentions in this connection the doubt on the part of Hesse as to whether what we have in ch.37 (and in ch.42) is really intercession, that is, an appeal by the prophet in the people's favour for a change in their fate. Hesse objects that ch.37 is not like Jer.21:1ff. where there is an attempt to alter God's will. On the contrary, says Reventlow, ch.21 forms a clear parallel to ch.37 as illustrated by the fact that both have the expression  $\psi 7 T$  (21:2; 37:7). In both cases, he claims, the intercession is part of an established institution and Jeremiah is an official prophet, in a relationship to the king with which one tends to associate the prophets of weal. This relationship exists even when the king is not explicitly said to have made the inquiry (as in 42:1ff.). In both chs. 37 and 21, the institutional prophet is not tied down to imparting a salvation-oracle. The presuppositions behind the third account of Jeremiah's being approached to intercede in 42:1ff. are, he says, somewhat different. Here it is not the king and his delegation, but other high-ranking persons and the inquiry is not concerned with military affairs but with whether they ought to stay in Judah or go to Egypt. The situation here corresponds, he asserts, more with the oracle by lot, whereby two opposing answers are possible. The inquirers are expecting not a salvation-oracle, but practical guidance for a particular action. He adds, however, that in his view the two types of oracle are closely linked in the OT (e.g. 1 Sam.23:2ff.). Again, Reventlow draws some startlingly rash conclusions. That  $\text{לֹא יִהְיֶה} \text{לָנוּ} \text{שָׁמַיִם}$  is used and not  $\psi 7 T$  shows, he says, that here the answer follows



according to liturgical order. The oracle follows the intercession as inseparable components of a ritual. The prophet is the mediator. Verse 9 clearly represents Yahweh's answer and is introduced with the messenger-formula. Thus, the prophet has to bear the people's prayer to God as an established liturgical function. (The similarity between Reventlow's hypothesis and Mowinckel's ideas about cultic prophets in the Psalms will be taken up later in relation to other references to intercession in Jeremiah.) The most obvious flaw in Reventlow's argument is that he can find a cultic setting for these intercession-oracle passages only because of his dogged determination to regard every prophetic function as cultic and not because of evidence from the text. He admits that 42:1ff. shows that the process of intercession and receiving Yahweh's word was not unconditionally bound to the sanctuary (cf. Ex.14:1; 20:1; 1 Kgs.14), but claims that this in no way undermines the cultic-institutional character of the process. It is hard to see how he can cling on to his thesis, and unless his view of Jeremiah's cultic position is accepted in toto, Reventlow's contribution to the problem of intercession and the prophets is not very enlightening. Against Hertzberg, he is surely correct, however, in affirming a link between prophetic intercession and prophetic proclamation. From the three instances in Jeremiah, he says, we see that intercession played an important part in the proclamation of the prophet and belongs directly to it. He may go too far in claiming that in one the prophet represents the people in their lament and in the other he conveys Yahweh's reply, but his assertion that both functions belong to the

realm of the prophetic office is to be taken seriously.

Hertzberg's contention, on the other hand, is that clear references to intercession in any technical sense are lacking in the canonical prophets. He disposes of the contrary evidence in Ezek.9:8,11:13 by claiming that they concern the reaction of the prophet to a special terror. Both places, he says, describe not intercession in the usual sense, but a cry of anguish about the people's plight, similar to the 'How long?' of Isa.6 and the pleas in Am.7. These texts do not suffice to regard Ezekiel as an intercessor. It should be stated that Hesse also thinks that intercession is largely absent in the canonical prophets but the two scholars differ in their reasons for this. Hesse thinks that intercession is of no significance, as all depends on Yahweh.<sup>1</sup> Hertzberg, on the other hand, thinks that intercession is lacking because it was the primary task of the prophet to proclaim God's word. He adduces as evidence the call narratives which, he says, are always concerned with the task of transmitting the word (Am.7:15; Isa.6:8ff.; 40:6-8; 42:1-4; Jer.1:9; Ezek.2:4f.; 3:1ff.). The call narratives are also testimony, he thinks, to the fact that there was no already existing institution to give the prophets legitimation, for the call itself is offered as the only legitimation that the prophet can have.<sup>2</sup>

As already indicated, however, this sharp differentiation between prophetic intercession and prophetic proclamation is not a happy one. Amongst those who take objection to it is

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1. Hesse, Die Fürbitte im Alten Testament, p.125.

2. Hertzberg, in Tradition und Situation, p.71.

Seierstad, who refuses to make Hertzberg's distinction between prayer and intercession.<sup>1</sup> Intercession is a part of prayer and in this way is integrally related to the word and revelation, since the word comes in all prayer; indeed, that is what prayer is. Seierstad stresses the importance of prayer in the prophets. Citing many of the references considered by Hertzberg, he says that the prophets are portrayed as men of prayer and also specifically as intercessors (Isa.37:4; Jer.37:3; 42:2). He agrees with Hertzberg in saying that prayer is a duty of men of God rather than being peculiarly prophetic.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, he thinks that intercession is part of the prophetic task. Seierstad's views lead one to doubt not only whether it is right to infer that because the prophets pray as men of God they are not, therefore, praying as prophets. Perhaps we do wrong to try to separate the two. As Lindblom says of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, 'In the intercessions of these prophets for their people it is difficult to separate what they did as pious men from what they did in virtue of the prophetic mission'.<sup>3</sup>

Lindblom makes another valuable comment concerning the relation between prophetic intercession and prophetic proclamation. He writes, 'The prophets were specialists in prayer in the same way as they were specialists in delivering

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1. Seierstad, Die Offenbarungserlebnisse der Propheten Amos, Jesaja und Jeremia, pp.140f.

2. See also Johansson, op.cit., pp.3-16, where he argues that the canonical prophets are intercessors, but only, like the early prophets, as men of God.

3. Lindblom, PAI, p.294.

the divine oracles and proclaiming the divine revelations. A balanced view of the prophetic commission must take both functions into account'.<sup>1</sup> A balanced view is exactly what Lindblom seems to achieve in this matter. At one extreme stands Hertzberg, who asserts that the prophetic function was to proclaim the word and if prayer and intercession came into this it was only because the prophets were men of God and, therefore, naturally men of prayer. At the other extreme stands A.R. Johnson, who asserts that there was common ground between prophet and priest in that both called upon Yahweh's name.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he thinks, '...just as the priest became the specialist in sacrifice, so the prophet was a specialist in prayer; he was specially qualified to act in this way as an intercessor'. In a note, Johnson says, 'The cases in which a canonical prophet appears as such a specialist in prayer are reserved for separate treatment'. It is unfortunate that this has not as yet appeared. One criticism of Johnson's view is that it makes too straight a division between intercession and securing help and guidance from Yahweh. As some of the examples discussed have shown, the two prophetic functions often belong together. From the evidence so far considered it would seem that intercession is indeed a recognisable prophetic function. Whilst Hertzberg is right in asserting that intercession is not peculiarly prophetic but proclamation of the word is, he

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1. Ibid., p.206.

2. Johnson, CPAI, pp.47-51. In fairness, it should be noted that Johnson here acknowledges that to speak in Yahweh's name is an equally important prophetic function.

does not take sufficient account of the fact that the two occur together in some cases and that intercession is expected of some of the canonical prophets. Whether or not this intercessory function in any way constitutes an office remains to be seen and the most pertinent material lies in Jeremiah. It is to this that attention must now be given.

One of the clearest references to intercession in Jer. is 18:20. Although neither 𐤅𐤅𐤓 nor 𐤕𐤋𐤓 is used, intercession is surely the activity described here. Even Hertzberg, who is so anxious to expunge any reference to intercession in the strict sense, accepts 18:20, together with 15:11 where 𐤕𐤋𐤓 is used, as referring to Jeremiah's intercessions.<sup>1</sup> It is strange that Hertzberg does not similarly accept that Jer.27:18 contains a reference to intercession. He claims that it speaks not of intercession but of prayer. Thus he regards the passage as an indication that Jeremiah sees prayer, in relation to the word, as a valid criterion of the prophet of Yahweh. This is somewhat unconvincing and the contrary view, that is, that here we have the idea that intercession is a mark of the true prophet,<sup>2</sup> needs to be considered.

One exponent of this view is Reventlow who raises some interesting points.<sup>3</sup> He mentions first of all the fact that

1. Hertzberg, in Tradition und Situation, p.73.
2. e.g., Jepsen, Nabi, p.201, 'Da sieht also auch Jeremia ein Kriterium echten, vollwertigen Nabiums in der Macht der Fürbitte'. It may be noted that both Rudolph and Weiser speak of intercession here.
3. Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia, pp.188f. See also pp.141f.



von Rad has used this passage to prove his thesis that intercession was a special cultic function of the prophets. von Rad's contention is that intercession is a function which, in the old sources, is ascribed with striking unanimity to the nebiim. He cites as evidence Gen.20:7; 1 Sam.7:5; 12:19,23; cf. Jer.15:1; 15:11. This intercession, he argues, does not take place in the form of free prayer but in the realm of the cult.<sup>1</sup> Reventlow comments on this as follows. von Rad, he says, is correct in his observation that intercession is not in the form of free prayer but occurs in the realm of the cult; but he goes too far in regarding it as especially the task of the official salvation prophets.<sup>2</sup> For, he says, intercession is not limited to prophets of weal and the intercessions of the great prophets of woe must come into the picture. Reventlow points out that von Rad's view has been challenged by Johansson on the ground that, according to Jer.27:18, intercession is exactly what is lacking in these prophets of weal.<sup>3</sup> He also mentions

1. von Rad, in ZAW, 51, 1933, pp.114ff.; cf. OT Theology, pp.51f., where he says that intercession is at least one main function of the nabi. It should be noticed that he says that it is connected with Isaiah and Jeremiah 'in a different way'. His meaning here obviously needs to be explained.
2. cf. Würthwein, in ZAW, 62, 1950, pp.10-52, where he makes a division between the nabi of the usual character, i.e., the weal-creating nabi, and the canonical prophets.
3. Johansson, op.cit., pp.20f. Johansson comments that von Rad is here supplementing Mowinckel's notion of the cultic prophet and his official function. Johansson contends that intercession was not the only test of the cultic prophets and that it is very questionable whether these prophets were in general bound to an established institution. He asks, does not Jer.27:18 in fact demonstrate the opposite of what von Rad is arguing? For there Jeremiah gives intercession as the criterion of a true prophet. It is seen to be lacking in the cultic prophets.

(Contd.)

Hesse's assertion that intercession is, indeed, part of the prophetic office and that these 'false prophets' are betraying their office in proclaiming popular oracles of weal.<sup>1</sup>

Reventlow says that the error in these interpretations is the separation it assumes between the office of the prophets of weal (nebiim) and that of the free prophets of woe. Rather, he asserts, there is one prophetic office, of which intercession is a component, and the question of whether or not a prophet is a true prophet depends on whether or not he is true to his office. Reventlow elaborates these statements in his treatment of Jer.14:1-15:9 and it is this passage, with its prohibition of intercession (14:11), together with the other reference to intercession being forbidden Jeremiah (7:16), which should now be examined.

It is of major significance to find an answer to the question of why it is that Jeremiah was forbidden to intercede. One possibility is that suggested by Hesse, to the effect that because everything depended on Yahweh, intercession was unnecessary and even impossible. Another suggestion is that offered by Hertzberg, whereby intercession is forbidden

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Contd.) If intercession had been their official function, Johansson argues, then it would not have been lacking. So, he concludes, their official function was rather to deliver oracles. Against this argument is the fact that intercession was clearly what was expected of these prophets in the situation referred to.

1. Hesse, Die Fürbitte im Alten Testament, p.47.

Jeremiah because it is not part of the prophetic task. He says that there is in the life of Jeremiah a tragic vacillation between the force of his prophetic commission and his own personal understanding and disposition.<sup>1</sup> His intercessions are not typical of a prophet, but spring from Jeremiah's humanity. Rudolph also says that Jeremiah is motivated by his own feelings of sympathy towards his people and that he is forbidden to intercede because there is no possibility of his being heard.<sup>2</sup> Now none of these solutions is very satisfactory and it is Reventlow who, in spite of his obsession with cultic ritual and forms, offers the best clue to answering the original question.<sup>3</sup>

He begins with a discussion of the unity of the passage 14:1-15:9. He mentions that Duhm regards the separate strophes as independent units and Mowinckel regards 14:2-10 and 14:7a-15:2 as two independent parts, originally two separate laments over the drought, in between which comes a conversation between Yahweh and the prophet. Volz and Rudolph, on the other hand, regard it as a unity and see the whole as a dialogue between Yahweh and the prophet. In either case, says Reventlow, form criticism makes it difficult to see here a private communication between the

1. Hertzberg, in Tradition und Situation, p.73. The inadequacy of this division between Jeremiah the man and the prophet becomes particularly evident in relation to the 'Confessions'. To suggest in connection with the intercession that there is such a clash is to oversimplify what would seem to be a fairly complex issue.
2. Rudolph, Jeremia, p.47, where he further says that the prohibition in 14:11 is part of the invective against the cult, in which there would usually be intercession. Stoebe makes the more reasonable suggestion that intercession is prohibited because it is too late. It is characteristic, he says, of Jeremiah's message that the time of God's long-threatened judgement is now, 'Prophet und Seelsorger', ThZ, 20, 1964, pp.396ff.
3. Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia, pp.148-187.

prophet and God.

After some discussion of the views of Gunkel and Mowinckel concerning the nature of 'prophetic liturgies', Reventlow makes the claim that we have here an example of a recognised form with a definite Sitz im Leben. From parallels in motif and expression in the Psalms of lament, he deduces that the form is the lament and that it belongs to the cultic situation.<sup>1</sup> The problem of why, if it is liturgical, the divine reply comes firstly in the form of a personal word of Yahweh to Jeremiah and speaks of the people in the third person is, he claims, soon solved. It is because of the mediatory office of the prophet. The 'I' of the prophet is, he says, a representative 'I'. In his rôle as intermediary, he speaks of the need of the people and of his own need as a member of it. We stand here at the point where the individual and collective laments touch. Jeremiah is the representative of the people bringing their lament and need before God and the representative of God who, in the events befalling the people, proclaims God's judgement. The value of this as an assessment of Jeremiah's position as a prophet will be discussed later. Of more immediate

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1. cf. Jeremias, op.cit., pp.162ff. He also rejects the division between canonical prophets of woe and cultic prophets on the ground that Jeremiah intercedes, but he disagrees with Reventlow, in believing that Jeremiah's intercessions are not primarily laments in public worship but his own prayers on receipt of his message of judgement (c. Am.7:2,5). True it is, he says, that Jeremiah is linked to a cult-prophetic function, but he is set at a distance from the worship laments of the people and is forbidden to intercede. Were Jeremiah a cultic prophet, this prohibition would have excluded him from worship where he exercised his prophetic function of intercession.

importance, however, is what Reventlow says about the prohibition to intercede.

In spite of other prohibitions to intercede (7:16; 11:14; 15:1), v.11 is not a general prohibition, but one related to a specific occasion.<sup>1</sup> Were this a basic prohibition it would, he says, have difficult consequences for the whole prophetic office, since intercession is an important part of this office. But this is not the case. The prohibition is only part of a special form which in Hebrew is used to express the refusal of intercession. The thought that it is a general prohibition is based, in his opinion, on a false interpretation of Jeremiah's prophetic office, on the assumption that there is an essential dichotomy between a prophet of weal and a prophet of woe. Reventlow sees in Jeremiah's reply (v.13) another instance of Jeremiah as intercessor. This is related to his position against the so-called false prophets, whose proclamation is the opposite of the word that he had received from Yahweh (v.12).

The fact that Jeremiah stands in the office of intercessor and yet receives an oracle of woe shows, he says, that this office is not exclusively linked to the proclamation of weal. The rejection of the intercession in 14:11 and 15:1 which makes the same point only more strongly in terms of the exemplary intercessors Moses and Samuel (e.g. Ex.17:11; 1 Sam.7:9f.),<sup>2</sup> demonstrates that the true prophet Jeremiah can

1. So, e.g., Volz and Weiser, against, e.g., Rudolph.

2. In contrast with some of the views mentioned earlier, Reventlow takes the reference as proof that intercession was a prophetic task. He also compares here the reference to Abraham as prophet in Gen.20:7. He fails to give any discussion of the use of the term nabi here or of the difficulty of Ps.99:6.



have this office. By contrast, the false prophets are bound to a message of weal, regardless of the people's disloyalty. He concludes that it is not a matter of official prophecy against unofficial prophecy, free against institutional, which is involved in distinguishing the true prophet from the false. It is rather a question of whether the prophet is true or false to his office, whether his proclamation is responsible or irresponsible.<sup>1</sup> Weal can only be proclaimed when the people fulfil Yahweh's Covenant requirements and it is the justification of the true prophet that he sees this and the condemnation of the false prophet that he does not.

Reventlow fails to make explicit what exactly is meant by a prophet's being 'true or false to his office'. With his general point of view, however, may be compared that of Macholz who, in dealing with Jer.14:11 and 15:1f is concerned with the nature of the prophetic 'office'.<sup>2</sup> Macholz argues that in these passages  $\text{לִלְכֹּט בְּנֶחֱם}$  seems to mean a specific act, in the execution of which he stands in a prophetic succession with Moses and Samuel. Here, as in other passages, he contends, it means seeking an oracle from Yahweh. This Jeremiah is forbidden to do and not as a private matter but as something which has to do with his prophetic commission. He is clearly forbidden  $\text{לִלְכֹּט בְּנֶחֱם}$  as a prophet. We must ask, he says, whether  $\text{לִלְכֹּט בְּנֶחֱם}$  is an 'official' function, in the

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1. This is perhaps a clue to why prophets and priests are often condemned together (e.g. Jer.6:13). Perhaps the priests under attack show a similar lack of responsibility and betrayal of their office.

2. Macholz, op.cit., pp.318-333.

sense of being part of an established institution in ancient Israel (pp.318ff.). It cannot be directly deduced that the prophet is someone who seeks oracles as the holder of a recognised office. In Jer.37 the task of seeking an oracle does not seem to be official in the sense of being a recognised function within a particular sphere. In Jer.42, however, it seems to be linked with the cult and its setting.<sup>1</sup> Further, in Jer.29:12ff., intercession is linked with fasting and, indeed, the prohibitions to intercede in chapters 14,15 constitute part of the fasting. Macholz interprets the prohibitions as prohibitions to seek the normal promise of weal, the normal salvation-oracle of Yahweh. Though he admits that it is not explicitly said that what is being forbidden is a salvation-oracle, he thinks that such an oracle is clearly what would be expected. In principle the oracle from God could be favourable or unfavourable (p.320), but Jeremiah is here being forbidden to seek a favourable oracle as he stands in a situation of woe, because the people have sinned and broken the divine relationship. What is forbidden in this situation is then not a general oracle, but a salvation-oracle. Macholz goes on to cite Jer.15:1; 37:3ff.; 42 as examples of the use of וְיִשְׁאָל to mean to seek a favourable oracle, where alternatives are possible (p.321). This is reminiscent, he suggests, of the early function of oracle by lot and this makes one wonder if the reception and proclamation of the word by the prophet is not more technical than we usually think (p.324). He contends that this, in

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1. This is surely questionable, and there are certainly no clear indications of such a link.

fact, shows that the prophet has a recognised office and that he is only 'free' in the moral earnestness of his questioning. The 'false' prophet, by contrast, has a technique which, whatever it was, was manipulated so that he would always receive a favourable oracle and so proclaim

□ 1 7 V (p.325).

So Macholz argues, Jeremiah has no intercessory office, but the office of seeking primarily the will and the direction of Yahweh. He appears as representative of his people with this self-understanding and, to this extent, his task lies in the realm of an established 'office'. Therefore, we can say that the opposition between Jeremiah and the prophets of weal is not one between free and official prophecy, but rather an opposition within the office which they hold in common. The prophets of weal become, in fact, the prophets without an office, in that they are not truly accepting it (pp.326f.). This office is the seeking of the word and it is the way in which Yahweh's way is made known to Israel (p.331). This office of mediating the word of Yahweh to the people of Yahweh is exercised particularly, he argues, in the cultic realm, where the word is the cultic word i.e. the favourable word (p.332). This office is held by Jeremiah, whose central task it is to seek and to deliver Yahweh's word (p.333).

It could well be, however, that Reventlow and Macholz are here hoist with their own petard and that the corollary of their argument that there were prophets who proclaimed □ 7 7 W regardless of the state of the nation is that Jeremiah is not in any official sense a cultic prophet. Reventlow's point that true and false prophets were distinguished

from each other by their sensitivity to the historical situation is made by other scholars,<sup>1</sup> and is convincing. The prophets inveighed against by the canonical prophets (e.g. Mic.3:5-8; Jer.6:13f.; 8:10f.; 14:13f.; 23:17 and Ezek.13:10,16) are condemned for leading the people astray by giving them unwarranted promises of  $\text{נְיָוֶשׁ}$ . A.R.Johnson writes, 'Indeed, in view of the importance attached to the intrinsic power of the prophetic "word", it is not too much to say that these prophets were consulted for the sake of securing such welfare...'<sup>2</sup> As discussed in an earlier chapter, it is not that true and false prophets are distinguishable simply in terms of whether or not they prophesied  $\text{נְיָוֶשׁ}$  but it is a question of whether their message is Yahweh's word for the particular historical moment. But the fact is that it is precisely the task of proclaiming  $\text{נְיָוֶשׁ}$  that is commonly ascribed to cultic prophets, particularly by Mowinckel, who gives content to the term cultic prophet by saying that their function in the liturgical context was to give on Yahweh's behalf the salvation-oracle in reply to the lament.<sup>3</sup> This is surely the source from which Reventlow derives his idea of the cultic office of the prophet. The connection between so-called cultic prophets and so-called false prophets is, of course, made by neither Mowinckel nor Reventlow; but it is striking. As also argued earlier, it does not seem possible to equate the two groups of prophets. Cultic prophets were not necessarily false. But

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1. e.g., Buber, op.cit., pp.62,178.

2. Johnson, CPAI, p.315.

3. See above, pp.182ff., etc.

because of their position in relation to the court and the fact that they were expected to prophesy  $\square 17W$ , they were likely to be so. If this is the case, then it is extremely difficult to regard Jeremiah as a cultic prophet. Rather it sets him further apart from any notion of such a prophet.

All this also makes it difficult to justify the use of the term 'office' for Jeremiah's position. Since it is likely that prophets in a fixed office in the cult would prophesy  $\square 17\psi$ , perhaps we do better to speak only of prophetic functions rather than of a prophetic office in relation to the canonical prophets. Whether this is, in fact, so will be considered shortly in relation to a discussion of the basis of Jeremiah's sympathy for his people and his resultant anguish. Reventlow, however, says that, like 14:1-15:9, they indicate the mediatory and intercessory function of the prophet.<sup>1</sup> The laments, he claims, are clearly those of the whole people, whilst the prophet is the speaker. Thus, on the one hand, the prophet stands over against the people and can speak of them in the third-person (8:19,21,22,23); on the other, he identifies himself with them.<sup>2</sup> The main argument against regarding these passages

1. Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia, pp.191-204, especially pp.194,200.
2. He goes on to quote (ibid., p.201) Wheeler Robinson's 'The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality', Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments, p.56, '...the prophet owes his peculiar place as an intercessor with God to the fact that he temporarily becomes the nation.... The profound sympathy of the prophet with the people...owes not a little to this corporate identity'.



as evidence that Jeremiah has a cultic position is that the form of a lament need not indicate a liturgical function as Reventlow claims. This is a vast subject in itself but two points should be remembered here; firstly, that forms do not always remain bound to their original Sitz im Leben, and secondly, that form and function need to be distinguished.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence is compelling in favour of the view that Jeremiah felt himself called to be an intercessor for his people and regarded his intercessory activity as a merit (18:20).<sup>2</sup> Just why this was so and what motivated his intercessions, whether they were accepted or rejected, now needs to be considered.

That Jeremiah appears as a mediator in some sense is largely undisputed, but determining the roots and the sphere of this activity depends on the line one takes in the interpretation of Jeremiah.<sup>3</sup> On what is Jeremiah's close relationship with his people based? It is possible to adopt a psychological approach to the study of Jeremiah<sup>4</sup> and hence to affirm that his individuality and unusually fine sensitivity are what make him into a mediator. So, for example, as already seen, Hertzberg thinks that Jeremiah's intercessions spring from his humanity. It is as a man and not as a prophet that Jeremiah is motivated to

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1. See Fohrer, 'Remarks on Modern Interpretation of the Prophets, JBL, 80, 1961, pp.311f.; cf. above, pp.225ff.,etc.

2. So Lindblom, PAI, p.385.

3. See Stoebe, op.cit., p.385.

4. See, e.g. Ewald, Die Propheten des Alten Bundes, II; Duhm, Israels Propheten, pp.244,246,269.

intercede. Thus, in Hertzberg's view, there is a strong tension in Jeremiah, between his commission to proclaim the word of judgement and his temperament which makes him want to appeal against this judgement; hence his rebellion against the prohibitions to intercede (14:1-15:9; 7:16; 11:14).<sup>1</sup> The inadequacy of such an approach becomes apparent in considering the call narrative in Jeremiah and it appears again in relation to the 'confessions'. It would seem from the latter that the clash is not simply one between the man and the prophet, between the man's inclinations and his prophetic office. On the contrary, as will be argued below, precisely Jeremiah the man in all his humanity is Jeremiah the prophet. It is not so much a case of his temperament needing to be overwhelmed before he can be a prophet so much as the whole man's being involved in the prophetic vocation, needing to work out what this is and fulfil it. Moreover, as Stoebe rightly says, to see the speciality of Jeremiah in a higher measure of sympathy implies a very subjective standard. It is highly questionable whether the man who is made 'a fortified city, an iron pillar and bronze walls' (1:18) is characteristically sensitive and sentimental.<sup>2</sup> This is not to deny that Jeremiah had a great compassion for his people, which would be to fly in the face of examples such as 14:17 and 8:23. Nor is it to deny that 'out of such feelings intercessory prayer emerges'.<sup>3</sup> But it does give rise to grave doubts about the idea that this is the sole source of Jeremiah's

1. Hertzberg, in Tradition und Situation, pp.72f.

2. Stoebe, op.cit., p.388.

3. Lindblom, PAI, p.205.

intercessions. What then are the alternatives?

One of these is the view adopted by Reventlow, to the effect that Jeremiah occupied a cultic position and that his task of intercession was official. Reventlow mentions early in his discussion of the subject of intercession in Jeremiah the argument of von Rad, that because intercession was so firmly established in the office of the nebiim and so in the nature of prophecy, even Jeremiah, a prophet who went his own way, believed himself bound to it.<sup>1</sup> This, says Reventlow, is no solution. Nor does he find satisfactory the suggestion of Hesse to the effect that Jeremiah's desire to intercede springs not from a feeling of duty in relation to the prophetic office but from an internal obligation.<sup>2</sup> Hesse writes, '...es ist bei Jeremia nicht nur ein äußeres Verpflichtetsein, sondern vor allem ein inneres Gebundensein an dieses Amt. Aus dem viermaligen Verbot, der Fürbitte...ersieht man indirekt die Intensität seines betenden Eintretens für andere; diese kann nur aus dem Gefühl der höchsten inneren Verpflichtung'. But says Reventlow, Hesse's own conclusions contradict the view that Jeremiah's intercessory activity does not stem from his office. For, according to Hesse, Jeremiah's intercession is not just the casual result of his taking up the office of the earlier prophets as a duty, but rather arises from the fact that Jeremiah regards such intercession as integral to his own office.

Reventlow's criticism of Hesse is certainly correct if

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1. von Rad, in ZAW, 51, 1933, pp.114f.

2. Hesse, Die Fürbitte im Alten Testament, pp.46ff.

the latter, in the quotation given, is suggesting that Jeremiah's internal obligation lay in his character and temperament. But it is not at all clear that this is so. Rather it would seem that Hesse is feeling after a notion of office which is different from the institutionally cultic office envisaged by Reventlow. Reventlow's contention that Jeremiah's intercession is related to his office may well be valid, but there is no strong evidence that this office is cultic. His interpretation of the references to intercession in Jeremiah stresses Jeremiah's relationship to his people. Jeremiah is set apart not as someone in a particularly close relationship to God so much as the representative of the nation. But is this what is most characteristic of the prophet's position? It will be argued in relation to the call narrative that it is not and that Jeremiah, as prophet, has a special commission resting on a special relationship to God. Reventlow virtually ignores this aspect, and this fact, together with his tenuous evidence of a cultic Sitz im Leben for Jeremiah's intercessions, makes his solution unacceptable.

Another view which lays great emphasis on Jeremiah's relation to his people is that of, for example, J.M. Berridge, whereby Jeremiah's intercession is seen to stem from his strong awareness of his membership of God's people.<sup>1</sup> Referring to such expressions as 'my tents' (4:20), in which Jeremiah is speaking both for himself and for his people, Berridge writes,

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1. Berridge, op.cit., pp.41f. where he makes a similar point in connection with the call narrative. Whilst Reventlow regards the parallels between the call narrative and other OT material as evidence that Jeremiah was institutionally installed into a cultic office, Berridge sees them as an indication of Jeremiah's bond with his people. See further, ch.IV.

'It was possible for Jeremiah to represent his people through his own "I", not because he was the holder of a cultic office, whereby his "I" might automatically have embodied the community which he represented, but rather because of his complete awareness of the nature of his own individual "I" and the knowledge of his oneness with his people which resulted from this awareness.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Stoebe says that Jeremiah shared his people's feelings of perplexity and sin and Lindblom states that Jeremiah had 'a feeling of solidarity with the people in its sinfulness and guilt'.<sup>2</sup> All this is true and Jeremiah's relationship with his people must by no means be forgotten; but it is not the only relationship in which he stands as prophet, and the solutions which stress the prophet's relationship to God must also be examined.

There are, of course, a number of ways of looking at the relationship between God and the prophet and it is quite wrong to lump them all together as if they were essentially the same. It is possible, for instance, to take Heschel's line and stress the divine pathos which the prophet feels. Less extreme is Seierstad's insistence on an I-Thou relationship of an intensely personal kind. It is also possible to emphasise the divine presence determining the prophetic life, whereby the prophetic 'I' is caught up in the divine 'I', in message and mission.<sup>3</sup> But, so far as Jeremiah is concerned, it is clearly important to try to ascertain how the prophet conceived his pastoral task. As Stoebe points out, to guard

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1. Ibid., p.218.

2. Stoebe, op.cit., pp.394,399; Lindblom, PAI, p.205.

3. See, for instance, Meagher, 'The Prophetic Call Narrative', The Irish Theological Quarterly, 39, 1972, p.171.



against the recurrent danger that Seelsorge is regarded as an emotional state or a psychological technique, we must seek to give the term actual content.<sup>1</sup> Stoebe's attempt to do this is helpful, and, I think, offers a way forward in determining the part that intercession played in the activity of the prophet Jeremiah.

The basis of Jeremiah's being set apart from his fellow-men in a special relationship to God lies, Stoebe holds, in his particular responsibility and awareness as a prophet. So, he says, Jeremiah's cries of anguish spring not from his timidity but from his sober estimate of the people's position. One passage which Stoebe mentions as illustrating this prophetic responsibility is Jer.6:27, in which we see Jeremiah's position as tester ( ׀׀׀׀ ). As such, Jeremiah was appointed to examine his people, distinguishing between that which was good and that which was evil.<sup>2</sup> From examples in the Psalms and the prophets where the verb is used of Yahweh, it is plain says Stoebe, that the prophet's task is here not just a matter of scrutinising impassively, but of being anxious that the nation should be purged of its evil, and being active to accomplish this.<sup>3</sup>

It is important, however, that this prophetic responsibility cannot be isolated from the prophet's bond with his people. So, says Stoebe, Jeremiah is as perplexed as his

1. Stoebe, op.cit., p.204.

2. See Lindblom, PAI, p.204; and von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.74, where he says that all the prophets from Amos to Malachi regarded this office of assayer, each in his own way, as theirs, demanding sustained vigilance in passing judgement upon men and circumstances; and see above, pp.249ff.

3. Stoebe, op.cit., p.388.

people; he is involved in their suffering and sin. He himself is called to return (15:19) just as he calls his people to return (4:1). There is, therefore, a tension within his vocation. He knows that judgement must come and yet, at the same time, he hopes that it may not.<sup>1</sup> In this way, Jeremiah's special individuality, his humanity, is a witness to God. He bears as intercessor the whole need and suffering of men and, at the same time, his laments demonstrate the strength of the divine passion. Because of this, we cannot say that in Jeremiah the prophetic task and his human consciousness are at odds. Rather, the opposite is the case.<sup>2</sup>

Whilst there is disagreement over the question of how new this is, there is general agreement that in Jeremiah we see an extension of the prophetic vocation. von Rad, in particular, speaks of 'the way in which their office increasingly invaded their personal and spiritual lives'.<sup>3</sup> He too speaks of the prophet's two-fold suffering, that of those upon whom judgement is coming and also God's grief over his people. He writes, 'The prophet's office...had an intercessory function linked with it from the very beginning. This prophetic ministry of mediation becomes theologically important at the point at which the prophet's office begins to make inroads into his personal life...'.<sup>4</sup>

Now von Rad is not always careful in his use of the term

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1. Ibid., pp.405ff.

2. Ibid., pp.393,409.

3. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.274.

4. Ibid., p.403.

'office', but at this point, his distinction between office and function is informative, and it is significant that intercession is here referred to as a prophetic 'function'. Unless Reventlow's idea of Jeremiah's occupying a cultic position is accepted, it does not seem reasonable to speak of Jeremiah's having an intercessory office. Indeed, as we have seen, everything militates against his having such a static position.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it seems highly probable that the prophets were regarded as intercessors. It is unsatisfactory to explain this simply in terms of the prophets being men of God, like judges, elders and priests.<sup>2</sup> For they were not judges, elders, and priests, but prophets, and as such they were requested to intercede. Nor is it satisfactory to make Hertzberg's rigid distinction between oracle and proclamation of the word and intercession, and to speak of one as a true prophetic function and of the other as incidental. For it is obvious that the personal complaint of Jeremiah is bound to the execution of the prophetic commission; the 'lament' is a thorough part of the prophet's message.<sup>3</sup>

It would seem that in understanding Jeremiah's intercessory task both sides of the prophet's position are important and we must lose sight of neither. Jeremiah, as

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1. e.g., Stoebe, op.cit., p.387, where he says that Jeremiah's task in delivering the prophetic message is not dependent on the will and judgement of the royal court. The prophet is concerned not with the desired destiny of the king but with the will of God.
  2. See Hertzberg, in Tradition und Situation, p.74.
  3. So Stoebe, op.cit., p.394. This needs to be explored further in relation to the 'Confessions'.

Reventlow and Berridge rightly stress, is strongly aware of his membership of the nation and in this way his intercessions show him as a representative of his people in its guilt and sorrow. Yet, Jeremiah is set apart from his people because of his relationship to and commission by God and in this way he is particularly qualified to offer intercession.

Just as it is extremely difficult to show that Jeremiah had an official position in court or cult, it is extremely difficult to show that he had an official task of intercession and to speak of this as the prophetic office. Jeremiah does not appear to have had an office, if this is understood in the sense of a position established by a superior human authority. But, as will be argued in relation to the call narrative, it may be reasonable to speak of Jeremiah's prophetic office in the sense of a position established by Yahweh. If Jeremiah, or indeed any of the canonical prophets, claims to have an office at all, it is surely that of being Yahweh's messenger. To this extent Hertzberg is right in asserting that the peculiarly prophetic task is proclamation of the word. He is also right in saying that intercession is not limited to prophets. Similarly, other functions performed by prophets are, it is often argued, shared by other functionaries, especially priests. Nonetheless, intercession is in Jeremiah and elsewhere closely linked with the word and it is impossible to eradicate all trace of intercessory prayer from Jeremiah's activity. It can, therefore, be urged that intercession is one of the functions constituting the prophetic office.

iii) The Deuteronomic laws about prophets

We saw earlier, both in the general discussion about 'office' and 'vocation',<sup>1</sup> and with regard to the prophetic 'office' of spokesman,<sup>2</sup> that the crucial passage is Dt.18:15-22. The interpretation of this passage and the Deuteronomic presentation of prophecy must now be considered.

Muilenburg thinks that this pericope occupies a crucial place in the structure of the whole book and that the subject is the office-bearers of ancient Israel: judge, king, priest, and prophet (Dt.17:8-18:22), of which the prophet's office is designed to be climactic. Moses, he says, is understood to be the supreme prophet, the first of the prophetic order who is here passing on his office to speak and proclaim the word of Yahweh. Whether the claim is unbroken or not is irrelevant. The point is that there is an institution of prophecy and the assurance that Yahweh will ever and again raise up its members. Moses is speaking here as mediator of the covenant and is identifying the office of the mediator with that of the prophet (vv.15f.).<sup>3</sup> This is to take seriously the Deuteronomic description of Moses as the first in a succession of prophets. As we have seen, the passage can then be taken as evidence of a prophetic office of covenant-mediator, which operated within a cultic context.<sup>4</sup> However, scholars are divided as to how seriously we should take a) the reality behind Dt.18:15, and b) the use of the term 'prophet' for Moses. On the second point, it is often

1. See above, p.171.

2. See above, pp.252ff.

3. Muilenburg, in The Bible in Modern Scholarship, pp.86ff.

4. See above, pp.252ff.



urged that the term 'prophet' is applied to Moses loosely to mean simply a man of God<sup>1</sup> or that it represents later reflection on the analogy between Moses and the prophets, that the tradition of Israel taken as a whole does not regard Moses as the prophet *κατ' ἐξοχήν* but portrays him in a variety of rôles and chiefly as the supreme preacher of the divine will.<sup>2</sup> The first point requires further discussion. It may be said at the outset that apart from those who argue for the hypothesis of the prophetic covenant-mediator, most scholars think that Dt.18:15ff. testifies not to an historical fact, i.e., the existence of a prophetic office deriving from Moses, but to a presentation and interpretation of the rôle of the prophet, as conceived by the Deuteronomist.

This is maintained, for example, by Clements, who, as we have seen, rejects the hypothesis of a distinctive 'office' of the prophets in Israel deriving from the old position of an amphictyonic covenant-mediator.<sup>3</sup> There is, in his opinion, no substantive evidence that the prophetic ministry was in any conscious way a revival, or continuation, of the earlier office of the mediator, or law-speaker of such an amphictyony. Further, he says, there would surely have been explicit mention of such an office had it existed.<sup>4</sup> This passage, he says, can only be made to support this by a

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1. See above, ch.I, pp.14,21f.

2. e.g. Eichrodt, Theology of the OT, II, p.290.

3. See above, p.257.

4. Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, p.41.

very conjectural and unlikely interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Everything hinges on the identification of the prophets 'like Moses' whom the author has in mind. The early Jewish interpreters regarded the passage in an eschatological sense and took it to indicate the coming of a special prophet in the future who would be like Moses and who would fulfil a particular task in connection with the Law; but, says Clements, this cannot have been the intention of the original Deuteronomic authors. They must then have been either recalling a prophetic 'office' or institution that once existed or seeking to introduce a new understanding of the work of particular prophets, in which case the authors are themselves responsible for giving it the form of a rather stereotyped office. In either case, he continues, the question is whether the reference is to prophets who are otherwise quite unknown to us, or is intended to shed more light on prophets about whom we do have information from the books of Samuel and Kings and the canonical prophets. We need to remember, he says, that the activity of Nathan, Ahijah, Elijah, and the eighth century canonical prophets would be known to the Deuteronomists and he thinks that the most satisfactory interpretation of Dt.18:15 is that it represents a Deuteronomic interpretation of the work of certain prophets in Israel. 'It is not, therefore, an attempt to restore an old institution but a reflective interpretation of the significance of the appearance of certain prophets in Israel. It seeks to comprehend the work of certain prophets, whose preaching

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1. Ibid., p.14.

was highly regarded, in relation to the law that had once and for all been given through Moses. In this way it introduces a distinctive understanding of the rôle of these prophets in the light of the message that they had proclaimed'.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Clements regards Dt.18:15ff. as pointing to an awareness of the existence in Israel of prophets whose words and activity were being interpreted in a highly distinctive way. It presents us with an interpretation of the work of certain unnamed prophets which views them as functioning within the order of the covenant which was inaugurated on Mt. Horeb by Moses.<sup>2</sup> He suggests that we see this reflected in the redaction of the prophetic books and in passages such as 2 Kgs.17:13ff. 2 Kgs.17:13ff. asserts that it was the function of the prophets to warn both Israel and Judah to repent and keep the law. Thus, the prophets are presented as preachers of repentance whose message was a call to return to the law. This sets their preaching within a theological context of covenant ideas and vocabulary. It represents 'an attempt to interpret the rôle of the prophets as falling within the divine covenant of Horeb'.<sup>3</sup>

Clements maintains that by the middle of the sixth century there had emerged an overall interpretative assessment of the prophets' message and that 'the laws regarding prophecy in Deuteronomy and the assertions of the Deuteronomic Historian provide the earliest stage to which we can penetrate

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1. Ibid., pp.13f.

2. Ibid., p.42.

3. Ibid., pp.49ff.

back to obtain any kind of external witness to the religious interests which led to the presentation of the prophetic literature'. Further, he says, this Deuteronomic interpretation provides us with an important key to understanding how there grew up in Israel a conception of 'true' prophecy which could be contrasted with the activities of rival 'false' prophets. The laws in Dt. (i.e., Dt.13:1-6; 18:15ff.) have been formulated with this problem in mind. The true prophet is a prophet 'like Moses'.<sup>1</sup> Clements argues that there emerged in Israel and Judah from the eighth century onwards a conception of 'true' prophecy which was in principle canonical. He writes, 'Among certain circles in Israel, which must have stood very close to the Deuteronomists in their outlook, there grew up a regard for certain prophets and their message which vested in them a kind of canonical authority'. This conception is what lies behind Dt.18:15ff. and 2 Kgs.17:13ff.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the prophet himself became a figure of tradition and his rôle became stereotyped as that of the spokesman of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel.<sup>3</sup>

In his treatment of Dt.18 and of the Deuteronomic presentation of prophecy, Nicholson is particularly concerned

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1. Ibid., pp.52f.

2. On this connection between the prophets and the Deuteronomic movement see also Engnell, in Critical Essays on the OT, p.174.

3. Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, pp.54ff. Clements also thinks this stereotyping tendency to be evident in the redactional activity which produced collections of the individual prophetic sayings into books, for example, in the understanding of the prophet's rôle as revealed in the call narratives of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. On this, see further, ch.IV.

with Jeremiah.<sup>1</sup> He writes, '...the method of the Deuteronomists witnesses to an exegetical principle which had for its basis their acknowledgement of the enduring vitality of the Word of God and for its goal their desire and determination to actualise that word for the generation to whom they addressed themselves'.<sup>2</sup> The material in the book of Jeremiah may, he argues, 'be plausibly regarded as the deposit of a tradition which embodies the oracles of Jeremiah as they were transmitted and used by a circle of traditionists as well as material which is the direct product of such a circle' and, 'the large amount of prose material in the book is best understood not as the literary work of individual authors and editors but as essentially the product of such a tradition'.<sup>3</sup> This is no place to examine Nicholson's general view of the prose sections in Jeremiah, but the main point for our discussion is his contention that one of the major themes of this prose is the presentation of the prophets as the spokesmen of the law, the mediators of the word.<sup>4</sup> So, he thinks that chs.23 and 36, for example, are not dominated by a biographical interest but are rather stories centring on the theme of Judah's rejection of the word of Yahweh spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, and the judgement which this rejection entailed. They are closely related to the Deuteronomic Prophetenaussage in 2 Kgs.17:13ff.;

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1. Nicholson, Preaching to the Exiles.

2. Ibid., p.7.

3. Ibid., p.10.

4. Ibid., p.57.



based on the Deuteronomic theology of the rôle and function of prophecy (Dt.18:9-22). He also cites Jer.7:25-34; 25:3-11; 29:17-19; 35:13-17; 44:4-6 as passages which are, in his view, based on the theme and reproduce the literary form of the Deuteronomic Prophetenaussage.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in Nicholson's view, the prophets are conceived as the successors of Moses, through whom the Law was revealed and given by Yahweh to Israel. As such they are not, he contends, office-bearers but are regarded by the Deuteronomic circle 'as having been in their condemnation of Israel's apostasy the representatives of the covenant and in their preaching the spokesmen of the obligations which it imposed upon Israel as formulated in the Law of Moses'. In Deuteronomic theology, he says, the Law and the Prophets belong together and this two-fold theme of the prophetic preaching of the Law and Israel's rejection of it is represented to a very pronounced degree in the Jeremianic prose tradition.<sup>2</sup> The examples of this which Nicholson discusses include the passages which are concerned with false prophecy (Jer.13; 23; 27; 28; 29). Chapters 27-29, he believes, represent separate units which have been woven together on the basis of the common theme of false prophecy, a theme greatly developed by those who transmitted the original

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1. Ibid., p.56. He rejects here any division between sermons and discourses and the so-called biography. He says, 'the division of the prose in Jeremiah into two separate sources with different origins and authors cannot be sustained and...both types of material, the homiletical and the "biographical" share a common provenance and authorship' (p.57).

2. Ibid., p.58.

material, for whom the problem appears to have been a particular concern.<sup>1</sup> Chapter 27 in its present form reveals, according to Nicholson, all the characteristics of the Jeremianic prose tradition. Chapter 28 is clearly the continuation of Chapter 27 and the criterion formulated in vv.8f. for discerning the true form of false prophet appears to be based upon Dt.18:21-22.<sup>2</sup> V.17, he says, displays the Deuteronomic fondness for recording the fulfilment of prophecy. In this passage, he says, the Deuteronomists 'have been concerned to draw out the implications of an incident in the life of Jeremiah for a problem which was the vital concern for them and for those to whom they addressed themselves'. Nicholson finds similar Deuteronomic parallels in Chapters 29, 14, and 23. It is clear, he concludes, that false prophecy was a problem with which Jeremiah himself was concerned (see Jer.2:8; 5:13,31; 23:9-22), but these passages are the product of the traditionists also concerned with the problem.<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting to note in contrast to Nicholson's arguments R. Davidson's attempt to show not the unity between Deuteronomy and Jeremiah but the disunity.<sup>4</sup> The suggestion is that Deuteronomy represents orthodoxy, such as provided the theological impetus for the reformation of 621 B.C., in which Israel was called to obedience and exclusive loyalty to Yahweh (see Dt.6:4-9; 10:12f.; 11:1, etc.). It is in this context, Davidson says, that we are to see the two passages in

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1. Ibid., p.94.

2. Ibid., p.97. He here cites Volz, Rudolph, Weiser, and Bright in his support.

3. Ibid., pp.99-103.

4. R. Davidson, 'Orthodoxy and the prophetic Word', VT, 14, 1964.

Dt.13:1-6 and 18:15-22 which seek to legislate for prophecy.<sup>1</sup> In Dt.13 the law is that any prophet who seeks to seduce the people from their allegiance to Yahweh must be disregarded no matter what his credentials. Dt.18:5-22 seems to recognise that the test proposed in 13:1-3 may have only limited value. It speaks of the succession of prophets who will mediate to the community of God as Moses had done at Horeb. Both passages offer the purely pragmatic test of fulfilment.

Davidson goes on to suggest firstly that these texts were probably used by the religious orthodoxy of the day to discredit Jeremiah and brand him as a 'false' prophet and secondly that Jeremiah was driven to criticise these texts as being irrelevant to the developing religious situation of his day.<sup>2</sup> He argues that these tests represent a religious apartheid at odds with Jeremiah's message to the exiles (Jer.29, e.g. v.7, cf. Jer.21:1-10 etc.) and that in the light of Dt.13:3 Jeremiah appears as a politico-religious fifth columnist proclaiming treason against the noblest reformed tradition of his people. The thesis that Jeremiah stood condemned in the light of the orthodox assessment of prophecy helps to explain, he says, certain aspects of his ministry:- i) the savage and consistent opposition from the religious establishment, ii) his total failure in one of the traditional rôles of the prophet, viz. that of adviser to the ruling monarch - Zedekiah did not follow his advice (e.g. Jer.37:2; 38:17-19,24ff.), iii) Jeremiah's own religious

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1. Ibid., pp.409f.

2. Ibid., pp.410-414.

crisis, in which he was 'punished by the burden of a prophetic word which devout men dismissed as false, but to which Jeremiah had to remain true' (20:7-12). Davidson regards Jer.23:9ff. as a collection of sayings, in which an editor has assembled criticisms of prophetic orthodoxy which Jeremiah must have voiced on many occasions. Vv.13ff. speak of prophets who promote evil themselves and allow the evil society to go unchecked. This, says Davidson, constitutes apostasy, such as condemned in Dt.13:1-6 only less open and Dt. has no word to say about it. In vv.25ff. Jeremiah contrasts  $\text{נָבִיא}$  and  $\text{חֹזֶן חֶזְיוֹן}$  whilst Dt. identifies the 'prophet' and the 'dreamer of dreams'. Vv.17f. are, in Davidson's view, a deliberate echo and criticism of Dt.18:22 with its insistence that any prophet whose word is not vindicated by events is a false prophet. Jeremiah is saying that the content of the prophetic word at the time of its delivery is the ultimate test of its truth or falsity.<sup>1</sup>

Davidson's conclusion is that the old tests are inadequate because of the very nature of prophecy, which 'though it builds upon a religious tradition,...speaks a new creative word to each age, a word varying in content and emphasis with the needs of the age'.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, he says, any attempt to legislate is doomed to failure.

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1. That this is not the only possible view of this is mentioned above, ch.II, pp.109ff.

2. R. Davidson, op.cit., p.477; cf. Skinner, op.cit., p.187.

Whatever one's views of the relation between Dt. and Jer., the final point in Davidson's argument is surely convincing and suggests that the OT prophet cannot be fitted into an institutional position. With reference to Dt.18:15-22, Noth writes, 'the Deuteronomic law recognised that the prophet was exercising an office, linked to the treatment of the offices of judge, king and priest', an office which went back to Moses himself. Yet, he says, even the Deuteronomic law cannot really place the prophets in the series of office-bearers, for, unlike the others, the prophet has no permanent and established powers, but has to prove himself genuine by the authority of his prophecy.<sup>1</sup> Thus Noth thinks that this passage represents not a reality but an attempt of the legislator to try 'from an ideological standpoint to fit the phenomenon of prophecy within the scheme of office in general'. If this is accepted it need not, of course, suggest that this attempt is unimportant in what it has to say about the position and function of the Israelite prophet. Moreover, a conception of a prophetic 'office' is significant, even if it does not correspond to an historical reality. The fact of the existence of the laws which attempt to regulate the prophets could perhaps be taken to indicate that they have an official position. The fact remains, however, that we have found in our discussion of prophetic

1. Noth, in The Laws in the Pentateuch and other Essays, p.247 (cf. Plöger, op.cit., p.179, 'Die Autorität des Propheten beruht nicht auf Rechten, die aus einem Amt hergeleitet werden, sondern auf seiner Verkündigung, deren Richtigkeit von Inhalt, nicht aber von Zugehörigkeit zu einer amtlichen Institution abhängig ist'). It is also worth noting that Dt. offers no directions for distinguishing between true and false priests, which suggests that the priesthood was sufficiently institutional for such tests to be unnecessary.

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functions no regular and regulated 'office' into which the prophets can be fitted, save possibly that of messengers and we have yet to be shown that this is, in fact, regular and regulated.

As we saw earlier, Noth maintains that by the very nature of the case the charismatic speakers called to Israel's service could not fulfil an office - 'Indeed the phenomenon of OT prophecy cannot be understood in the sense of an office. Its basis is an independent divine calling, which cannot be bound to any order of a worldly nature'.<sup>1</sup>

Surely this is significant from a man who cannot be accused of setting prophet and priest, free and institutional, against each other as simple opposites. One of the strongest arguments against the idea that prophets had an official position in Israelite society is hinted at by Noth. This is the fact that the prophets did not have an official privilege which, once conferred, could not be withdrawn. This is particularly apparent in Jeremiah (e.g. 15:19), where his right to speak rests on his response to Yahweh. As Welch puts it, Jeremiah, in speaking of his call, 'is not asserting his claim to a limitless authority, as though all he spoke were ipso facto possessed of divine power. He is entering into the function of prophecy and taking up its perennial burden, that Yahweh is about to reveal Himself in and to His world'.<sup>2</sup>

All this is persuasively against the existence of an

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1. Ibid.

2. Welch, Jeremiah: his Time and his Work, p.55.

institutional office for the canonical prophets, and in particular for Jeremiah. Is it then reasonable to speak of the prophetic 'office' at all or should we simply speak of the prophetic function or functions? For all Noth's saying that human and divine appointment were not distinguished in ancient Israel, the fact remains that occasions arose when these clashed. This is surely the sense of Am.7:10-17 and it can also be seen in Jeremiah's encounters with authority (e.g. Jer.26:12). What does the prophet do on these occasions? He appeals to his commission from Yahweh as his only justification. He is appointed by Yahweh and this appointment he must fulfil. To this extent he is claiming an office. In the face of opposition from official representatives of the state, he is claiming a prophetic office, instituted by Yahweh. It is a conflict between offices. Without claiming that all prophets have exactly the same view of it, 'office' is surely a reasonable term to use here. The prophet's only claim to authority rests in an office instituted by Yahweh.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Baltzer, 'Considerations regarding the Office and Calling of the Prophet'. in HTR, 61, 1968, in which he suggests parallels between the function and position of Egyptian viziers in relation to the king and the function and position of the Israelite prophet in relation to Yahweh. Thus the prophet is set apart from the other officials. His authority is supreme and derives from Yahweh. See also ch.IV, pp.494, etc. On this use of the term 'office', see below, ch.V, pp.512-514, 580-584.